a healthy appreciation of risk and a willingness to persevere are essential qualities for a freelance writer.

I gross about the average wage each year, though claim on tax for travel, phone, internet, rent, office stationery and pay TV.

A downside is dealing with accounts departments. Paying freelancers remains something of an afterthought, and irregular cash flow can make budgeting difficult.

Some find it hard to work from home. There is a removal in terms of colleagues. But I work my own hours, play golf twice a week and look after twin baby boys. And it's what I'd do until I up stumps. And if you're prepared to persist and (as I did) live off savings and credit cards, work on building sites and pack supermarket shelves by night, then why not be paid to crawl around pubs, play golf in Tahiti and haul in barramundi in our ancient northern wilderness?

SUE WHITE

rested in construction work

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

MY CAREER
.com.au

TOOLS OF
THE TRADE

Serviette

Name Priyanka Rao
Job Furniture designer
Where Evolvex.com.au
Why is it important?
I'm often out in meetings, and many of these are in cafes or bars. I have my iPad and iPhone, but when it comes to something creative I find it easier to write it down on paper. I'm in a cafe, serviettes are always around. Before meetings I'll write my dot points on one, doodle on the other. Of course, I will then take my serviette drawing and turn it into something more professional. I'd never present it to a client.

What do your colleagues think?
People probably find it a bit funny, but among designers it's quite common. There's also something nice about drawing in a casual way; there's a feeling of throwing away judgment. You're not committing to anything. Often, you find you can progress a lot of ideas in that state, because you're so open.

Unusual moment?
Around the time I was doing the first designs for Evolvex, I was out with friends at a cafe and started drawing ideas and diagrams on a serviette. I still have that serviette. We recently filed a patent, and some of the drawings for that patent originally came from that serviette.

How much does it cost?
Free. You can always ask for more and they are easily stowed in a handbag. I highly recommend them as thinking tools. It's not like drawing on a white piece of paper; it's so easy to think creatively on something like a serviette.