

MODULE ONE: WHO AM I?

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Values

It has often been said that, if there were an easy-to-follow formula for success, everybody would be successful. We all know that this isn't the case. **Many artists and cultural workers, regardless of ability, are unable to support themselves solely from the work they love. Others don't want to, preferring a job separate from their "calling" to ensure that their creative endeavour doesn't get "mixed up" or "compromised" by business considerations.** For those who decide to become a professional, moving from working for pleasure to working for pleasure and profit, there are a few adjustments that need to be made. The first adjustment is to take the time to really see who you are.

Most people start working in the cultural sector **because they have a passion** to create or to be part of something that touches their souls. As they set about pursuing this goal, they, like most other people, seldom conduct an **honest appraisal** of their ability to succeed. They don't consider their strengths and weaknesses, their potential, their values, and what makes them who they are. Some have difficulty defining that elusive concept called "success."

'Go to your bosom: Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know.'
William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

Although often omitted from traditional private-sector business plans, **a Values Statement** should play an important role in any cultural-sector business plan. Such a statement allows you to explain the artistic and social values that motivate your work. Corporations, banks, and government agencies all have a history of trying, usually unsuccessfully, to understand professions which do not always have "profit" as their primary motive, but which have a profound impact on the type of society we are. **Artists have a different currency.**

When developing your Values Statement, take the opportunity to **explain your intentions and beliefs**, and what drew you to your choice of livelihood. Remember that goals and actions should be shaped by your values and what is important to you. A Values Statement is much more than just a "touchy-feely" expression – it is an indication of your **"driving force"** that, in a very practical sense, will keep you on the right track.

If the Value Statement for a contract designer digitizing a museum's archival collection stated his commitment to "maintaining the most up-to-date technology skills and equipment," he could easily justify setting a professional and business goal of upgrading of equipment and technical knowledge rather than purely focusing on expanding market share.

Try setting out your Value Statement as **a list of between two and five values**, ranked in order from the most essential value influencing the success of your plan to the least essential. Your statement or list of values does not have to be formal – an indication of your beliefs, as a foundation for your goals and the business plan itself, is what is important.

Sample Values ©Alliance for Arts and Culture, 2006/7

Achievement	Accomplishment	Accountability	Acknowledgement From others
Advancement possibilities	Adventure	Aliveness/vitality	Analytical
Approval	Artistic	Arts-related work	Athletic
Autonomy – being self-directed	Being a valued team member	Being fully engaged	Being in control
Being right	Being the best	Being trusted	Beauty in some form
Belonging to a group	Building a business	Caring	Caution
Challenging work	Challenging the “status quo”	Collaborative	Competition with others
Connection with family and friends	Connection with community	Contact with children	Contribution to general knowledge
Contribution to the organization	Contribution to people in need	Contribution to social change	Control over my environment
Cooperation with others	Courage – acting on convictions	Creativity	Cultural opportunities
Democratic workplace	Dignity	Directed by others	Diversity
Doing the right thing	Doing things my way	Educational opportunities	Emotional expression
Empowerment	Enlightenment	Entrepreneurial	Engagement in the work
Environmental sustainability	Equality with others	Equity or fairness	Esteem of others
Excellence	Excitement	Expressing myself fully	Fame
Family well-being	Feeling good	Financial security	Fits my personal values
Fixing broken things / systems	Flexible policies such as scheduling	Frankness / openness	Freedom
Friendship	Fun and Laughter	Fulfilment	Getting ahead
Giving of myself	Goodness / worthiness	Good benefits	Happiness
Hard work	Harmony in speech and action	Health	Helping others
High ethical standards	Honesty	Holistic ways of thinking	Humour

Inclusiveness	Imaginative	Independence	Inner harmony
Innovation / inventiveness	Integrity	Interesting experiences	Intimacy
Investigative	Intellectual challenge	Job security, personal security	Joy
Justice	Keeping a low profile	Keeping things the same	Leadership opportunities
Learning opportunities	Leaving work at work	Leisure time	Living where I want to live
Location of work	Looking good	Love	Loyalty
Making good money	Mastery	Meaningful	Meticulousness
Money	Multi-culturalism	Nonviolence	Nurturing
Organization's health	Open-minded	Opportunity for advancement	Opportunity to learn
Opportunity to specialize	Order	Out-door orientated	Pace and rhythm of work
Peace	Perseverance	Personal development	Play / playfulness
Pleasure / gratification	Physical challenge	Power	Preparation for retirement
Privacy	Productivity	Quality of product or service	Reach for the stars
Recognition	Reliability	Respect	Revolution / rebellion
Safety	Saving / investing	Security	Seeking truth
Self-control	Self-directed	Self-esteem	Self-expression
Self-reliance	Self-respect	Sense of belonging	Sense of importance
Service	Setting an example for others	Simplicity	Social advancement
Social contacts	Solving problems	Spiritual development	Spiritual values
Spontaneity / improvisation	Stable routine	Stature (social/ professional)	Stimulation, excitement
Strength	Team spirit	Time for life outside work	Truthfulness
Uniqueness	Using my talents	Variety	Vigorous competition
Wealth	Winning	Wisdom	

The following is an example of a **Value Statement** from an effective business plan.

Respect for the Sector

The most important value is a desire to be of benefit to the Canadian arts community in its entirety, while working for specific organizations within it.

Customer Service / Customer-Oriented Nature

The second-place value situates the company as one that not only focuses upon the customer, but which defines its success by the degree to which its clients are satisfied.

Responsiveness

The third-place value is linked closely with the previous two values and indicates a high regard for consistent quality and reliable service, coupled with respect for the customer's needs.

Integrity

The fourth-place value indicates the company's desire to be known for its honest professionalism and ability to adhere to straightforward ethics and principles.

Progressiveness

The fifth-place value signifies an aspiration to be continually forward-thinking and to utilize the newest innovations and technologies to provide the most effective service.

Values

Develop an outline of what is important to you by answering the following questions:

What are the five most important things in my life? (ie. Family, critical acclaim, health, wealth)
Why?

What are the five qualities I like most about those I admire? (i.e., strength, compassion, honesty...)

If I had no limitations of time or money, what would I do with my life? Personally? Professionally? (i.e., travel the world, live on an island)

How would I like to be remembered? (i.e., as a famous artist, as a kind person, as a person with integrity) What do I want people to say about me at my funeral?

If I had only six months to live, how would I spend my time? (i.e., stop working; complete a final, definitive work; spend more time with friends and family...)

Now look closely at your answers. Do you see a pattern? Or do you notice that your answer for number four, for example, is vastly different from your answer for number three? If some of the answers are similar and you notice a pattern, you have a pretty good idea of who you are and where you want to go. If you don't, go back to these questions and consider the reasons for the discrepancies.

The answers you have given to the above questions will give you some insight into your values - the set of beliefs that act as a foundation and a rationale for all of your goals and actions. If you hope that people remember you as an **imaginative** person, then **creativity** is obviously something you value and something you should strive toward realizing and maintaining throughout your personal and professional life.

If you need help, refer to the Sample Values chart.

Your overall value for life

- After doing your list – determine your overall value for life

No matter where you are in your cultural development, you will always enhance your career by learning more about yourself and life in general.

Talents & Skills

Assuming you already know that you have artistic interests and a creative personality, the most important self-knowledge you need to acquire now is **knowledge about your skills**. Aesthetic interests alone don't necessarily lead to employment. When working on choices in career and employment areas, spend as much time on your skills as you do on your vocational interests. Interests and skills together, point to an occupation. More than any other factor, your skills help you translate who you are into a 'job'.

Skills are what you DO, expressed as verbs (like playing, speaking, writing, helping, directing, and so on). They are what you do on the job, and they can be used in any number of different jobs (and activities, paid or unpaid). Your most important skills are talents or aptitudes that you have developed through use. It feels good to use these skills; it may even feel bad NOT to use them. Knowing and using your skills lies at the heart of career development...

...When you do work that fits your skills, you feel less stress. These skills seem easy to use, because you don't have to force yourself, or exert great amounts of discipline or willpower. When you work with your natural strengths, you usually enjoy the process and feel you're doing it well. It's like flying with the wind, instead of against it.

Besides helping you identify less-stressful ways to make a living, there are other advantages to knowing your skills. One of them is that **focusing on your skills enhances self-esteem**. Whether you call them skills, motivated abilities, strengths, talents, or gifts, they are positive things about you. When you use them, you feel good about yourself. When you see that they are part of who you are and that you have used them since youth, your confidence grows. You'll develop inner security about your ability to support yourself and to make a meaningful contribution through your skills.

When you are aware of your skills (able to name them, own them, and discuss how you have used them) you can be more articulate during your job-hunt. Skills are what employers want to know about. (If you are your own employer, it's even more important that you know these well!) Skills are what you put on a résumé and what you talk about during an interview ... You support your statements with concrete, relevant, detailed stories of accomplishments from your past.

Everyone has talents and skills. They can be defined as:

Talents: the natural abilities you were born with.

Skills: abilities that are developed to meet specific needs: sometimes, natural talents that are enhanced, other times, learned abilities that are required to perform specific tasks.

Many of us have trouble recognizing our talents because they seem so natural to us. Our culture also strongly emphasizes the principle that you must earn a living by the sweat of your brow, making it difficult to believe the fact that your destiny can actually involve doing something that comes easily to you, and that you love.

Example: a musician might have had the ability to sing from early childhood, and based on their interest in opera, took voice training lessons as part their studies before joining Vancouver Opera.

Talent: to sing **Skill:** to sing opera (an enhanced talent)

Now if this person had also learned digital music editing while studying, they could add:

Skill: to digitally edit music (a learned skill).

Knowledge of your abilities allows you to assess any situation where there is a work potential and to decide the following:

- Can you do the work?
- What additional information or training do you require?
- What are your strengths, what are your weaknesses?
- Does the work match-up with your mission statement/work vision?

Knowing your talents and skills improves your ability to direct yourself towards work that you love, enhances your self-esteem, makes you more articulate, and lowers the level of stress you experience. It's all about self-awareness.

THE HOMEWORK

The purpose of the following exercises is to enable you to decide whether or not you “have what it takes” to achieve your career goals. These exercises will provide insight into your own style and help you recognize where you need improvement and how to achieve it. They will generate as many questions as they answer. You should see this as an opportunity for introspection rather than a pass-or-fail test. Ultimately, only you can decide if you “have what it takes,” because you are the only one who knows what success means to you.

Accomplishments

List your accomplishments, both in your career and in your personal life. What have you done that has made you especially proud? Cultural workers can often create their own opportunities. Rank your accomplishments from the most to the least important to your professional life. Which accomplishments have contributed most to your career goals? What do you feel you need to accomplish before you can become successful? The answers to these questions will help you to begin to see yourself more objectively. Also consider how others perceive your accomplishments.

Jodi Bacchiochi, an intern with the Youth International Internship Program (offered through the Canadian Museums Association, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade’s Youth Employment Strategy at the time) didn’t wait for someone to create the opportunity for her. She created and developed the proposal that would have normally been initiated by a Canadian museum, and spent her internship in Fiji establishing the Pacific Islands Museum Association. Jodi has since been hired to work as Secretary-General of the Association she helped to build.

Do I Have What It Takes? Worksheet

Accomplishments

List your accomplishment (i.e., had poetry published, won a community award, finished a university degree, found a sponsor for a project). What have you done that has made you especially proud?

Rank these accomplishments from the most to the least important to you.

Accomplishments	Importance

Characteristics

Determine how well the following traits of successful entrepreneurs fit you. (5 = high; 1 = low).

Characteristics	Rate yourself				
Perseverance	5	4	3	2	1
Initiative	5	4	3	2	1
Drive	5	4	3	2	1
Willingness to ask for help	5	4	3	2	1
Willingness to accept the help offered	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to tolerate uncertainty	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to work within self-imposed standards and time frames	5	4	3	2	1
Flexibility	5	4	3	2	1
Self-confidence	5	4	3	2	1
Commitment	5	4	3	2	1
Access to financial resources	5	4	3	2	1
Courage	5	4	3	2	1
Emotional resilience (the ability to survive repeated rejection)	5	4	3	2	1

What was your score? A high score doesn't automatically assure you riches and fame, nor does a low score necessarily condemn you to certain failure. Anyone can make a disastrous business decision or stumble upon an unexpected opportunity. However, comparing yourself generally with strong entrepreneurs gives you "another piece of the puzzle."

You can refer to this worksheet for many different purposes over and above this self-assessment. The list can hold powerful words for you. They can form the basis of strong cover letters, project proposals, funding applications, business plans, or statements of personal affirmation.

TAMYC Chart of Competencies

Cultural Human Resources Council, 2002

You should find everything you do somewhere on the Competency Chart, but you will not necessarily do everything identified on the Chart.

Envision and develop your career strategy

- Set personal and professional values and priorities
- Analyze your strengths and weaknesses
- Consult with peers, mentors, elders, career professionals, etc.
- Assess current and projected external environments
- Establish short and long-term goals
- Identify ways and means to achieve goals
- Evaluate and modify career strategy

Create a business plan and market your art/creation/work/products

- Create a business and marketing plan
- Establish a communication strategy
- Export/tour your art/creation/work/product(s)
- Import art/creation/work/product(s)
- Establish and maintain relationships with representatives in matters related to
- Marketing, (e.g. agents, impresarios, dealers, etc.)

Manage a project

- Identify goals and objectives
- Determine project's feasibility, goals and strategy
- Create an action plan
- Conduct the project
- Control and evaluate the project

Manage resources

- Link up to relevant professional associations
- Identify and access government programs
- Access business support professionals
- Network with artists and other persons
- Access physical resources through renting, buying, borrowing, exchanging, etc.
- Establish and maintain mailing lists and databases
- Manage information

Manage financial affairs

- Develop a long-term financial strategy
- Develop and manage a budget
- Access financial resources
- Identify and access donations-in-kind and services
- Administer remuneration

Manage legal matters

- Manage relationships with legal advocates
- Establish and enforce contracts and agreements
- Provide for loss and damage
- Protect copyright (e.g. intellectual property, trademarks, performance rights, neighbouring rights, moral rights, etc.)
- Defend against legal action
- Fulfill statutory obligations (e.g. benefits, sales taxes, income tax, etc.)

Communicate effectively

- Demonstrate listening skills
- Communicate orally
- Write effectively
- Negotiate agreements
- Resolve conflicts
- Match communications skills to technology

Demonstrate personal competencies

- Keep the “sacred fire”
- Make appropriate decisions
- Demonstrate time management skills
- Manage one’s development
- Demonstrate teamwork skills
- Innovate and act creatively
- Maintain self-care and well-being

Essential Skills: What Are They?

Workplace Education Manitoba, 2009

The 9 Essential Skills Are:

- Technical Reading
- Document use
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Oral Communication
- Thinking skills
- Working with others
- Computer use
- Continuous learning

Essential Skills: Why Are They Important?

People use Essential Skills in different ways in different workplaces. However, all of the Essential Skills are used in some way in every workplace. Here are a few examples of the way Essential Skills might be used in your work as an entrepreneur.

- Reading and interpreting legal documents such as contracts, agreements, and tax forms
- Filling out and keeping track of the paperwork requires for running a business
- Getting financial information from charts, tables, and graphs, interpreting financial statements
- Communicating and selling ideas to others
- Initiating contact with others, networking, and making small talk
- Questioning and interacting with customers
- Resolving conflicts
- Negotiating contracts with suppliers and customers
- Preparing a Marketing Plan
- Writing email messages, letters, and short reports
- Developing and monitoring budgets
- Analyzing the pros and cons of a plan
- Creating a monitoring schedules, and making adjustments if necessary
- Evaluating the quality of advertising and making good judgments about design, layout, colour, logos, etc.
- Using problem-solving strategies to constructively resolve problems, issues, and concerns
- Using a decision-making process to make sound business decisions
- Researching, gathering information, and monitoring trends
- Making efficient use of time
- Organizing and prioritizing work tasks
- Dealing with interruptions and resolving tasks that go off-track
- Responding to situations that arise unexpectedly
- Remembering the names, faces, and voices of customer and their history as part of providing good customer service
- Organizing and directing the work of others
- Taking advantage of learning opportunities
- Using computer technologies and software programs

Talents & Skills Exercises

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EXERCISE 1: REFLECTING ON YOUR SKILLS

People say, "oh, you are so good at...". Write down what comes to your mind (and tonight, call at least 5 people you trust and ask them to complete the sentence. Write down what they say).

Write down a list naming each talent you have, as they come to mind. If you have enhanced your ability to use that talent, note how you've done so. Use extra paper if necessary.

Talents I have:

I have enhanced these by:

Now write down a list naming each skill you have developed. Note where and when you acquired that skill. Use extra paper if needed. This exercise is to get you started. More will come later.

Skills I have:

Where and when I acquired them:

- In the context of your work life, which of those talents and skills are you no longer using?

- What/ who is responsible for you no longer using these talents/skills?

- Who does your inner voice say is responsible for the development of your talents and skills?

- How do you imagine incorporating your talents/skills into your future activities?

- In this space, or on a separate sheet, draw a shield or crest with four separate, equal parts in it. In each part, draw (or write) a symbol of your four most cherished talents. This shield will assist you as you carry out your mission.

EXERCISE 2: APPRECIATING YOUR TALENTS

Are you using your natural talents in your work life as an artist? Many people take their talents for granted, and focus themselves on amassing a huge inventory of learned skills, wondering why they are still not happy in their work. Studies show that people are happiest working when they are using their talents, and the more aware you are of your talents, the easier it is to incorporate them into your work life.

Check off each talent you feel you possess. To each list, add any additional talent not mentioned.

Creative Talents: Good at...

<input type="checkbox"/> expressing myself verbally <input type="checkbox"/> expressing myself non-verbally <input type="checkbox"/> expressing myself through words <input type="checkbox"/> acting <input type="checkbox"/> drawing <input type="checkbox"/> singing <input type="checkbox"/> perceiving colour <input type="checkbox"/> perceiving special relationships <input type="checkbox"/> remembering words	<input type="checkbox"/> remembering shape <input type="checkbox"/> remembering sound <input type="checkbox"/> discriminating tone <input type="checkbox"/> writing <input type="checkbox"/> recalling objects <input type="checkbox"/> discriminating pitch <input type="checkbox"/> remembering rhythms <input type="checkbox"/> discerning <input type="checkbox"/> composition	<input type="checkbox"/> sensing texture <input type="checkbox"/> building things <input type="checkbox"/> imagining and visualizing <input type="checkbox"/> dancing <input type="checkbox"/> learning languages <input type="checkbox"/> discerning proportion <input type="checkbox"/> sensing style <input type="checkbox"/> seeing light and shadow <input type="checkbox"/> perceiving opportunities
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Interpersonal Talents: Good at...

<input type="checkbox"/> working with others <input type="checkbox"/> attending to other's needs <input type="checkbox"/> entertaining people <input type="checkbox"/> helping others <input type="checkbox"/> making people laugh <input type="checkbox"/> performing for an audience <input type="checkbox"/> staying calm under pressure <input type="checkbox"/> showing vulnerability <input type="checkbox"/> inspiring people	<input type="checkbox"/> working alone <input type="checkbox"/> being generous <input type="checkbox"/> expressing ideas <input type="checkbox"/> leading people <input type="checkbox"/> managing people <input type="checkbox"/> persuading people <input type="checkbox"/> showing support <input type="checkbox"/> teaching people <input type="checkbox"/> clarifying	<input type="checkbox"/> empathizing with people <input type="checkbox"/> being a team leader <input type="checkbox"/> handling emotional crises <input type="checkbox"/> listening attentively <input type="checkbox"/> mediating and resolving conflict <input type="checkbox"/> relating to diverse people <input type="checkbox"/> showing warmth <input type="checkbox"/> motivating people <input type="checkbox"/> being discerning
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Organizational Talents: Good at...

<input type="checkbox"/> performing many talents at once <input type="checkbox"/> analyzing needs <input type="checkbox"/> attending to details <input type="checkbox"/> reducing things into smaller units <input type="checkbox"/> completing or concluding <input type="checkbox"/> seeing steps to achieving goals	<input type="checkbox"/> creating order out of disorder <input type="checkbox"/> finding & correcting mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> gathering information & data <input type="checkbox"/> sorting and categorizing things <input type="checkbox"/> initiating or beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> organizing people <input type="checkbox"/> prioritizing <input type="checkbox"/> keeping records <input type="checkbox"/> planning projects <input type="checkbox"/> negotiating
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Physical Talents: Have...

<input type="checkbox"/> speed <input type="checkbox"/> hand-eye co-ordination <input type="checkbox"/> strength <input type="checkbox"/> ability to maintain health	<input type="checkbox"/> stamina <input type="checkbox"/> flexibility <input type="checkbox"/> manual dexterity	<input type="checkbox"/> balance <input type="checkbox"/> power of concentration <input type="checkbox"/> good physical co-ordination
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Mental/Intellectual Talents: Good at...

<input type="checkbox"/> analyzing facts and ideas <input type="checkbox"/> analyzing and solving problems <input type="checkbox"/> perceiving/defining cause & effect relationships <input type="checkbox"/> generating & developing ideas <input type="checkbox"/> working with abstract materials & concepts	<input type="checkbox"/> inventing things <input type="checkbox"/> making decisions <input type="checkbox"/> contemplating <input type="checkbox"/> using statistics	<input type="checkbox"/> forecasting trends <input type="checkbox"/> thinking logically <input type="checkbox"/> retaining information <input type="checkbox"/> concentrating - focusing
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IDENTIFYING YOUR TALENTS

Now write out a list of all the talents you have chosen. Carefully consider your choices, show them to others (your partner, a close friend, respected peer). Ask for feedback - are you overlooking some? Have you overrated yourself in certain areas? Once you are clear, then list your top ten talents.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

EXERCISE 3: **RECOGNIZING YOUR SKILLS**

Over the years, you have acquired many skills, which have enhanced your existing talents or were learned because you needed them to do something. As you go through life, the complexity of the skills you choose to acquire often increases: remember learning how to ride a bike, compared with learning how to drive a vehicle?

This exercise will assist you to identify which of your current skills are the ones you most prefer to use in relationship to your work. One thing many of the skills analysis tests use in common is a coding of skills into three different groupings; ideas - people - things. Work through the lists below, placing a check mark by all the skills you have confidence using. Don't worry if there is some overlap with the choices you made during the talent assessment; there usually is. Add to your lists any skills not mentioned here.

IDEAS

Writing
Visualizing
Testing
Classifying
Studying
Proofreading
Composing
Budgeting
Comparing
Posting
Entering
Transcribing
Copying
Computing
Collating
Gathering
Compiling
Adapting
Evaluating
Examining
Analyzing
Reporting
Executing
Coordinating
Developing concepts
Synthesizing
Creating
Defining
Developing solutions
Discovering
Experimenting
Explaining
Researching
Drawing/illustrating

PEOPLE

Mentoring
Advising
Counseling
Guiding
Negotiating
Debating
Arguing
Exchanging ideas
Selling
Instructing
Teaching
Training
Demonstrating
Supervising
Organizing
Managing
Delegating
Motivating
Entertaining
Performing
Persuading
Influencing
Speaking
Directing
Attending
Helping
Taking instructions
Making recommendations
Collaborating
Acting
Singing
Telling stories
Communicating
Interviewing

THINGS

Crafting
Arranging
Assembling
Installing
Repairing
Operating a computer
Massaging
Cutting
Cleaning
Typing
Lifting
Handling
Placing
Throwing
Inserting
Tending
Manipulating
Controlling/operating
Precision working
Adjusting
Setting up
Building
Making
Overseeing
Maintaining
Producing
Shaping
Reconfiguring
Designing
Utilizing
Documenting
Improvising
Planning
Editing

Painting
Photographing
Playing
Composing

Promoting
Representing
Networking
Presenting

Budgeting
Negotiating/Contracting
Reporting

Now write out a list of all the skills you have chosen on a separate piece of paper. Beside each skill, specify exactly what/where/when/why or how it is used. Here are some examples:

- *Precision crafting wooden objects of my own design (from Things list).*
- *Photographing portraits of my own composition using natural light.*
- *Designing web pages that meet my clients' specific needs and concerns.*

IDENTIFYING YOUR SKILLS

Carefully consider your choices, show them to others (partner, friend, peer). Ask for feedback - are you missing some things? Have you underrated/overrated yourself in certain areas? Once you are clear, then list your top ten favourite skills.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Does this list match the skills you identified during the visualization? Have your choices favoured a particular category? Is there a pattern to your choices? Do these patterns form skill sets (groupings linked by common themes)? Do your skills cross over from one category to another?

When you next begin working on a new résumé, on a career profile, on a marketing statement and more, the effort made to get through these exercises will make those documents much easier to accomplish.

ASSESSING YOUR 'SOFT SKILLS'

The terms 'soft skills' and 'hard skills' are used to differentiate between those skills which seem concrete and straightforward and easy to measure from those less easy to define and pin down. Hard skills are the technical abilities required to do a particular job or perform a specialized task. Hard skills are generally acquired through training and education programs at schools, colleges and universities. A diploma, degree or certificate confirms that the relevant mastery has been achieved.

Soft skills are somewhat more difficult to define, referring as they do to a very diverse range of abilities. These are the transferable skills that keep you functioning and effective in any situation. They are often referred to as 'people skills' or can be those required to exhibit 'emotional intelligence'.

Here is a simple framework for self-evaluating on these skills. You can also ask a friend or colleague who knows your work to offer feedback. The list is compiled from several sources:

Skill	When have you used this most effectively?	How would you rate yourself on this skill?
Effective participation		
Leadership		
Interpersonal relations		
Negotiation		
Teamwork		
Self-awareness		
Change-readiness		
Flexibility		
Self-esteem		
Goal-setting & motivation		
Career development		
Creative thinking		
Problem-solving		
Listening		
Verbal communications		
Learning to learn		

Four categories of soft skills:

1. **Essential Skills** – reading, writing, basic computer applications, and the ability to think, analyse and solve problems. Other essential skills include the ability to adapt to a wide range of situations, to communicate effectively and the ability to work in teams.
2. **Management Skills** – the ability to manage people, capital and budgets as well as the ability to undertake organizational activities such as planning, marketing and evaluation.
3. **Leadership Skills** – the ability to motivate and assist others to achieve their full potential, to take risks and to formulate a vision.
4. **Contextual Skills** – the ability to operate successfully in different settings, such as different countries, different regions or a culturally diverse workplace.

Although technical or hard skills are necessary, by themselves they are not sufficient for commercial success. A liberal arts education has been given new, improved status as employers realize the soft skills

Skill Statements

What have you learned about yourself? Which skills are most important to the work you want to do? Which attributes are demonstrated? Do you have these, or can you develop them?

Now that you have considered everything that makes you who you are, you can consider what you have learned about yourself in relation to what we already know about the kind of people who succeed in self-directed careers. Nobody can possess only positive traits or excel in all things, but some characteristics are common to successful entrepreneurs, regardless of their area of activity. How many of these traits describe you?

For understanding where and how to market yourself, one of the most important tasks you need to learn is to identify your most marketable attributes: your skills and skill sets. The next, most challenging skill to learn is to write about these for use in any or all of the following marketing materials:

- Cover letters
- Proposals
- Business plans
- Resumes
- Portfolios
- Brochures
- Websites
- Blogs
- Social media

Once you have deconstructed your past experiences and tasks into small components, you are free to pick and choose and reconfigure these components into skill statements that are the most relevant for the intended audience. This 'intended audience' can be a potential employer, partner, work team, or even yourself (if you need convincing). There is nothing better to remind you of both your past achievements and future possibilities than a good skill statement.

The skill statement can be written in any number of ways, and when complete it should sound natural, not stilted. Before you get there, though, you need practice just getting the components written, so be as stilted as you must to make sure each skill statement has the following elements:

- 1. Name the skill.**
- 2. Define it with an appropriate adjective.**
- 3. Place it in a context where you used it most effectively.**
- 4. Include results.**

Here's an example from a Project Management Skill Set:

EXCEPTIONAL⁽¹⁾ DELEGATION SKILLS ⁽²⁾ Responsible for ensuring that project goals were achieved, I worked with a group of street-involved youth⁽³⁾, successfully assessing their strengths and using clear communication and expectations, so that the group produced a safety pamphlet in their own words - on time and under budget - which is now used throughout Canada ⁽⁴⁾.

This last bit is important because potential employers may see these skill statements as overstated or lacking proof unless there is a solid outcome. Many times the outcome seems difficult to measure, but have someone else work with you, asking questions, and helping craft an understandable measure, until you come up with something that works.

Look at other people's skill statements to help you get the language. Tune into your own response to their statements. Do they seem authentic – or false? Do they make you want to know more about the person, to ask further questions, or not?

These are clues to the effectiveness of the statement.

Another important point is that the time and effort spent on determining what the reader needs to hear about is not wasted time. Anyone looking at applications can tell you how these types of applications stand out. And at the same time, the constant review of the subject matter (that would be YOU) only serves to help you practice and reinforce your skill self-awareness and thus become more comfortable with describing, naming and owning these valuable commodities!

Who Defines What Constitutes an Artist?

Draft Canadian Artist Code

Artscape defines a professional artist as an individual who receives, or has received, professional recognition as defined by any one of the following criteria:

1. Has presented his/her work to the public by means of exhibitions, publications, performance, readings, screenings, or by any other means appropriate to the nature of his/her work;
2. Is represented by a dealer, publisher, agent or similar representative appropriate to the nature of his/her work;
3. Devotes a reasonable proportion of his/her professional time as an artist to promoting or marketing his/her work, including but not limited to: presenting him/herself for auditions; seeking sponsorship, agent or engagements; or similar activities appropriate to the nature of his/her work;
4. Receives or has received compensation for his/her work, including but not limited to: sales; fees; commissions; royalties; residuals; grants and awards, any of which may reasonably be included as professional or business income;
5. Has record of income or loss relevant to the exploitation of his/her work and appropriate to the span of his/her artistic career;
6. Has received professional training, either in an educational institution or from a practitioner or teacher recognized within their profession;
7. Has received public or peer recognition in the form of honours, awards, professional prizes, or by publicly disseminated critical approval;
8. Has membership in a professional association appropriate to his/her artistic activity whose membership or categories of membership are limited under standards established by the association; or which is a trade union or is its equivalent appropriate to his/her artistic ability.

NOTE: Applicants do not have to meet all the criteria in order to be considered a professional artist; however, selection committee members will use the criteria as a guide by which to make the determination of eligibility.

Show & Tell

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O.K., enough talk! It's time to have fun and enjoy each other's creativity. To put yourself in the right frame of mind for this session, imagine once again being a preschooler who is unselfconsciously keen to show others something of importance to you. It is NOT intended to be overwhelming, overly stressful, an audition, or a retrospective of your life's work. More showing than telling, if possible.

It is your opportunity to show what it is you do as an artist/cultural worker to your fellow participants, and let them in on your passion and process for creating, what matters to you, and why you are compelled to do what you do. **They are not there to critique your work**, but to learn more about you - the creator. People may have questions, comments or ideas about your work, but these are in the spirit of generating ideas on your behalf.

It is also a chance for you to see and hear and learn about this fundamental aspect of the lives of each of your fellow participants. It is an opportunity to learn, be surprised, inspired, and have your assumptions challenged. Remember that you have two roles to play: presenter, and interested, attentive audience. Each of these roles is ***equally important***.

As Presenter:

Here's your chance to show your work. For the visual artist, it may mean showing a portfolio of your work or some actual pieces; for the arts administrator, it may mean explaining your work process and highlighting this with examples from your work experience; for the dancer, it may mean demonstrating an excerpt from a performance piece or showing a video clip. The method is not important, but the attitude is! This is NOT a showcase of your very best work. Do NOT stay up all weekend fine-tuning your work or creating new pieces. You are not auditioning. Your goal is to let the others better understand your form of expression, where your passion comes from, which skills you have developed and where your interests lie.

As Audience:

Be attentive. Be interested. Be non-judgmental. Do not critique the work. Try not to be distracted by thinking about your own presentation. Look for key elements in the person's work or creative process that could be clues to their strengths, skills, important values, etc. You are getting a better idea about who they are as an artist and a person, but also getting clues that can help them with marketing, writing résumés, planning, etc. You may think of contacts for them, ideas about places or organizations which would be interested in their work, or where they would like to work, and so on. Jot down notes. Give them feedback. Ask questions if there is time, save them for later if not.

Logistics

Each person has a maximum of **15 minutes** to make their presentation, *including setup and takedown*. This allows enough time for a transition between each person. Don't sacrifice substance by using time on elaborate presentation methods. Leave space for people to absorb

and react to what you are sharing with them. This is your time, but the needs of your audience are important to consider, too.

To help focus your show & tell, please use the following guidelines (not necessarily in this order!):

- *Make a brief statement regarding your personal history, training, etc.*
- *Make an explanation of your work as an artist (verbal or nonverbal is fine).*
- *Talk about your passion and what inspires you.*
- *Focus the majority of your show on your current activities and interests.*
- *Show or demonstrate some aspect of your work process, including marketing tools you've used (brochure, flyer, portfolio, etc.) if that is appropriate.*
- *Make a statement regarding where you see yourself now and where you see yourself heading in the future.*

When preparing materials to show, choose key examples to illustrate your work - don't try to show us everything. Write a list of priorities you want to mention. Leave them wanting MORE!

If you require equipment or assistance with your presentation, let us know by Friday if possible. Some audiovisual equipment is available, so check its availability and be sure you know how to use it before you step up to make your presentation.

Show & Tell is an opportunity to learn about each other's creativity and the work experiences attached to it. It is a chance to gain insight into artistic processes with which you are not familiar and, most importantly, into the lives of the people with whom you are sharing the SEARCH experience.

You also get to witness amazing creativity and risk-taking, without having to critique the work. What you are looking for are opportunities to help people identify their strengths, and get effective feedback on their potential.

Effective Feedback

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Feedback is self-disclosing about how you are reacting to the way another person is behaving. The purpose of feedback is to provide constructive information to help others increase their awareness of the extent to which their behaviour affects others and how they perceive their own actions.

Purpose

The purpose of effective feedback is to provide constructive information for increased awareness. Remember to focus on:

Behaviour (specifically what they did or said)

Observation - not inference (what not why)

Description - not judgement

The Value to THEM of the feedback, not its "venting value" to YOU

Specific to Here and Now, not past or abstract

Sharing information - not giving advice

Exploring alternatives that might work better

Useable amounts of info - not an overload

Time and Place - appropriate for sharing

Some characteristics of helpful, non-threatening feedback

- Focus your feedback to another person on the following:
- The person's behaviour (what they actually did or said) rather than the person's characteristics.
- Observations you have made rather than inferences about the reasons for the behaviour you observed. WHAT is said rather than why it is said.
- Using descriptive words and images rather than judgmental language.
- Avoiding generalizations and absolutes, such as "you always..."
- Behaviour related to a SPECIFIC situation, (preferably in the "here and now"), rather than on behaviour in the abstract, (or in the vague past).
- The sharing of ideas and information rather than giving advice.
- Exploration of alternatives rather than giving answers or solutions.
- The value of the feedback to the person receiving it, not the value of the "release" that it provides you to give it.
- The amount of information that the person receiving it can use, not the amount that you might like (or need) to give. How would you know the difference?
- Time and place – balance the urgency to give the feedback with the need to share what is personal information at an appropriate time.
- Using "I feel/felt..." after describing the other's behaviour, to share how this has affected you, rather than "you made me feel..."

Critique vs. Criticism

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Critique is a professional technique of assessment and feedback that many artists are familiar with, which can also have useful application outside the arts, if used carefully and appropriately. Like most effective and powerful tools, critique can also be a weapon, when wielded by an untrained person or by someone using criticism under the guise of critique.

How would you apply the methods of critique in your work with others? Here are some guidelines:

- Critique is a deliberate review of a project or event. It is not a casual inquiry.
- Critique is focused on learning, not on evaluating or chewing out people.
- Critique examines whole projects or events, not just problems.
- Successes and failures are both examined, not just failures.
- Critique is focused on the future. It is not focused on the past.
- Critique is focused on opportunities. It is not focused on problems.
- Everyone involved discusses the event. One person does not tell others what to do.
- Everyone gains an understanding of what happened. Responsibility is taken, not placed, and is not shifted to an outside force.
- People accept responsibility for their actions. They are not told what they've done wrong.
- People face the consequences of their actions. They are not punished for "bad behavior".
- Clear decisions, not vague suggestions, are made on who will do what in the future.
- Records are kept for future reference about action steps. They are not kept as file records only.

Learning from Criticism

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"People who take criticism productively do not duck and dodge the critical points thrown at them, because they do not think of them as a military onslaught. Nor do they create interpersonal warfare by retaliating. And they certainly don't just stand there, letting themselves be victimized by a relentless critic." The Critical Edge by Hendrie Weisinger

A. What to Know: understanding the process...

Openness: Becoming Receptive	Appraising the Validity of the Criticism	Acknowledging the Criticism	Acting on the Criticism
Criticism is often a dirty word in our culture. In fact people often try to soften it by adding "constructive" or changing the word to "feedback". Sometimes these changes to the words just disguise the fact that criticism is not easy to listen to even though at an intellectual level we believe it could be constructive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - importance of the criticism. - source of the criticism - emotional content of the criticism – consistency of the criticism - amount of energy required vs. the benefits 		

B. What to Do: dialoguing with the critic...

Explore - don't REACT	Ignore manipulation	Own your own mistakes	Ask for suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do listen...actively Do ask clarifying questions Do give non-verbal cues that you want more Don't defend yourself 	Baiting remarks, sarcasm and hostile or irrelevant remarks can trap you. Remember that silence is an alternative		

1. What kinds of body signals do you get when someone wants to give you criticism?
2. How can you be open to hearing what they've got to say?
3. What signs can you recognize that you're "closing down"?

Making a Business Plan

David Parrish

Creativity and Business

Some people regard creativity and business as being like oil and water – they just don't mix. They think it's a question of choosing between creativity *or* business. I disagree.

The challenge for creative people when planning a business is to combine skilfully the best ideas of both 'T-shirts' and 'Suits', in other words, to bring together creativity and best business ideas, so as to turn creative talent into income streams. Successful creative entrepreneurs embrace both creativity *and* business.

The art of business is to select from a palette of infinite choices to draw together specific products or services, with specific customers' needs, in a way that adds up financially. The resulting picture is a unique formula for a successful enterprise.

Naturally, creative businesses tend to have a high concentration of new ideas in their product or service. Successful organisations of all kinds combine all the essential business elements creatively. Successful creative enterprises need to have a creative product or service; they also need to invent a special and workable formula of all the essential ingredients of business.

Crucially, this is not a 'compromise' between creativity and business – it's a matter of getting the best of both worlds.

Business Plans

Firstly, let's make a distinction between planning for a successful creative business and 'writing a business plan'. The two are not necessarily the same. In my own experience, many people write business plans purely because they are a requirement of investors or funders. These business plans tend to be written without conviction and are then quickly shelved once the third party investor has accepted (or rejected) the plan. A business plan should be primarily for the business itself, a 'route map for success', setting out the objectives and steps to be taken to achieve its objectives. Ideally a good business plan should serve the business well as a working document – as well as to articulate to third parties the benefits of the business, return on capital invested, risk management and other concerns of stakeholders and partners.

But the business plan is not a sacred document. A business plan does not automatically guarantee business success. Many business plans present the details but fail to address the fundamentals. Any business plan must be based on the values and objectives of the entrepreneurs concerned and at its heart must be a feasible business formula. Both of these are therefore worthy of further consideration.

Values and Objectives

When working with creative entrepreneurs as a business adviser and trainer, the first things I invite people to consider are the fundamental objectives of the enterprise. Everyone wants to be successful, yet we can have very different definitions of success. For some people it is wealth, for others recognition, or maybe social objectives are the *raison d'être* as is the case with social

enterprises. For many businesses it is a particular blend of these. It is not my job to define success for others – but as an adviser I do insist that entrepreneurs are clear about their own definition of success.

Business development is another fundamental issue to be addressed at an early stage – and as the business becomes more mature. Is growth the objective and if so, how is growth measured? It could be in terms of turnover, employees, market share or profitability. Many creative entrepreneurs do not want their business to grow large; instead they want to achieve a 'lifestyle business', based on their own talents, providing both a good standard of living and a good quality of life. For some businesses, success is measured by a 'triple bottom line', which takes into account not only profitability but social benefits and environmental impact. It's not only a matter of what the business does, but how it does it: values are important too. I use the term values widely to embrace everything from business ethics to personal preferences (for example for autonomy) to the 'corporate culture' of the organisation ('the way we do things around here'). These are matters that are often neglected in many generic business planning processes but are essential issues to be addressed at an early stage and revisited often. If business development is not fully consistent with the shared values of the entrepreneurs driving it, then discord and disaster are likely to occur.

Business partners need to be sure that they are on the same wavelength in terms of their definition of success and their values. As a consultant I have been asked to help solve problems in businesses only to find that the underlying cause – the real illness rather than the superficial symptoms – is in fact the absence of a shared vision. In other words the stakeholders are working hard but towards different goals, and perhaps also with different attitudes. No wonder problems occur.

Creating Possibilities

One of the characteristics of creative people is their ability to generate lots of ideas, and indeed a wide range of products and services derived from their creativity. And yet often people approach me for advice with very narrow and fixed ideas of the particular product or service they want to develop commercially. One of my tasks as a business adviser is to encourage them to create a wide range of possibilities, in other words, to open fully their creative portfolio to explore all the options available to them arising from their creative talents. Though it is necessary to generate lots of ideas, it is of course impossible to develop them all commercially, and this can be frustrating. We need therefore to select the best ones from all the possibilities. This requires imagination on the one hand, then analysis on the other. It requires both right-brain and left-brain thinking. Putting our brain into right-gear we should create hundreds of possibilities generously – then engage our brain in left-gear and select the best options ruthlessly. Of course few people are able to use both right-brain and left-brain with equal effect and that's why some of the best entrepreneurial partnerships are a combination of a creative genius and a hard-nosed business person, or an effective balanced team of people.

The best businesses combine both creative talent and powerful business techniques – what I refer to as the 'T-Shirts and Suits' approach. And this approach applies whether there is literally a two person partnership or a combination of both elements within a one-person business or an entrepreneurial team.

Knowing yourself

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will never stand in doubt” wrote Sun Tzu in the classic Art of War. In terms of creative businesses, it’s important to have an objective understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the people involved and of the business as a whole. A checklist which can be used to evaluate a range of aspects of the business – and the strengths and weaknesses in each area – is the PRIMEFACT checklist. This acronym stands for nine areas to be assessed: People, Reputation, Intellectual Property, Market Information, Ethos, Finances, Agility, Collaborators and Talents. It can be difficult to be objective about one’s own business, so the views of informed outsiders can be invaluable here. The information gathered can help to form a business strategy which plays to the strengths and avoids (as far as possible) the weaknesses of the enterprise.

Competitive Advantage

Having identified the strengths of the various aspects of the business, we need to take it a step further. This is to consider business strengths *in relation to competitors*. It’s one thing to be strong in a particular area, but if the competitors are strong too, or indeed even stronger, this does not give us a competitive advantage. We are looking for areas which make us stand head and shoulders above the crowd since these strengths give us competitive advantage. In competitive terms, gaining competitive advantage means playing to the creative strengths where we can win in relation to competitors and ironically this may not be our favourite or even ‘best’ talent. Nevertheless we may be able to use our creative competencies to solve particular customers’ problems better than anyone else.

Business radar

Just as a ship on a voyage across the ocean needs to use radar to scan the horizon for approaching friends and foes, creative businesses need to be constantly on the lookout for opportunities and threats in the environment. ‘PEST Analysis’ suggests we look in four directions for forces which could present opportunities or threats: the Political, Economic, Social and Technological arenas. A more comprehensive eight-point compass is ‘ICEDRIPS Analysis’, which suggests we need to look in the following directions: Innovation, Competitors, Economics, Demographics, Regulations, Infrastructure, Politics and Social Trends. Having listed all the current and imminent external forces which could present opportunities or threats to our enterprise, the next stage is to identify the key ones – and then plan accordingly, in order to seize opportunities and evade threats.

Barriers to entry: IP is the key

Many industries have barriers to entry. Setting up a mobile phone network or drilling for oil not only take huge amounts of capital but they are regulated by government licences. In contrast, most creative industry sub-sectors are vulnerable to new entrants to the marketplace since barriers to entry tend to be weak. So how can a creative enterprise defend itself from new entrants taking market share? One of the most effective barriers to entry – and one that is at the heart of the creative industries – is intellectual property. By using copyright, design rights, trademarks and patents, creative enterprises can protect themselves from competitors – or profit from the interest of potential new entrants through licensing arrangements. Not only can

intellectual property rights protect creative entrepreneurs from competitors, more positively those legal rights can generate sustainable income streams independently of continuous creative labour.

The Market Dimension

Creating possibilities needs to occur on a different dimension too. This is in the area of identifying potential markets, customer types and individual clients. Again, despite their abundant creativity in many respects, budding creative entrepreneurs often lack imagination when it comes to exploring possibilities in terms of potential customers. As in the case of creative products and services above, I encourage clients to use right-brain thinking to generate lots of ideas then engage left brain to analyse and select the best ones.

The Unique Business Formula

The objective of any successful creative business is *not* to reach an uncomfortable compromise between creativity and commerce. Being half-creative and half-commercial is just not good enough! On the contrary, the objective is to be fully creative and wholly successful. To achieve this we must imaginatively combine particular aspects of our creativity with carefully selected market segments. Given the number of potential creative products and services on the one hand, and the number of potential customer types on the other, the number of possible combinations between the two is a very large number. Indeed it is the one multiplied by the other and this can be expressed graphically as a matrix with creative products/services on one axis and customer types on the other. A successful business formula occurs when particular creative products and services are matched with corresponding paying customers. There are different ways to find a winning combination. One option is (metaphorically) to pick numbered balls from two separate bags (in the manner of a soccer tournament draw) and try and match a randomly-selected product with a randomly-selected market segment. Eventually you will achieve a hit, but probably run out of energy, money and time long before that happens. Clearly this is an extremely unintelligent approach! Yet the approach taken by some creative people when trying to make a business from their artistry is not dissimilar. It is by mismatching products and services with customer types that frustration occurs; selling out seems to be the only option to join together incompatible combinations. The intelligent approach is to set out all the possibilities and carefully select the best possible combinations, using common sense, market testing and pilot projects to home in on a successful business formula – and thus quickly eliminate the majority of possible combinations from the picture.

Targeting Key Customers

Creative marketing involves selecting markets carefully for particular products and services – rather than using clever creativity to persuade people to buy products they don't actually need or want. Whereas many businesses use a scattergun approach to publicity – then waiting to see who turns up, the most successful creative enterprises focus on particular clients and then make an active approach tailored to the target customers.

Working with others

As mentioned above, the most successful creative businesses take a 'T-Shirts and Suits' approach to business development, combining creative talents with best business practice. Very often this is achieved by a partnership or larger team. Very soon, therefore, the question arises about the

ownership and control of the enterprise as more people become involved. Company structures can offer various possibilities for ownership and control through the issuing of shares to stockholders and the appointment of company directors. Though company law differs from country to country, there are usually a range of structures that can be created within the framework of a 'limited company', including 'not for profit' (more accurately non-profit-distributing) options and constitutions suitable for co-operatives and social enterprises.

Strategic Planning

Having established the vision and values of the enterprise, and then carefully devised a unique business formula, the next stage in the planning process is to identify the key steps to be taken along the road to success. Put simply, strategic planning is a matter of setting out the crucial several steps that need to be taken to get us from where we are now to where we want to be. I encourage clients to envisage the future and see themselves having achieved the success they strive for – and then to look back from that future position along the road they have travelled, spelling out the crucial moves they made along the way. In this way, the steps (five or six, perhaps) can be more clearly seen. Returning to the present, those same steps are now in front of us and form the basis of our strategic business plan.

Conclusion

At the heart of business planning is the creation of a unique business formula for a successful creative enterprise. This involves exploring all the options in terms of creative goods and services on the one hand, and examining all possible market segments on the other. The resulting two-dimensional matrix offers a perplexing array of possible combinations. The art is in selecting the few best matches from all the feasible combinations of goods/services and customer types.

A successful creative business will be built upon producing goods and services at which we excel, matched with carefully selected customers. In this way, creative entrepreneurs can unleash their creativity without compromise *and* achieve commercial success.

This unique business formula is the key. Get this wrong and compromise or failure will result. Get it right and the creative enterprise will have a great chance of both creative and commercial success.

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