

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

10 Insights Creative People Have Already Learned From Entrepreneurs

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This week I had coffee with two filmmakers who made their first movie and discovered, surprise, they'd have to distribute it themselves. They leapt to the challenge – and had such a good time they are already starting their next project. Their experience is becoming more common.

We have passed beyond the moment when creative people need to take lessons from entrepreneurs. They've graduated and, like all good students, they have exceeded their teachers in some interesting ways. In fact, we're now at the point where entrepreneurs can learn equally from artists.

I hasten to add that true entrepreneurs are highly creative too, and that's why they get along so well with filmmakers and musicians, painters and poets. Creative people and entrepreneurs are cut from the same cloth, although perhaps from different parts of the weave.

Here are 10 insights creative people have already learned from entrepreneurs, along with the special artistic spin they have added.

- 1. It's all up to me.** There's no publisher, distributor, promoter or agent who will do it for you. Artists now accept they have to do it themselves. Authors set up their own book tours and come up with promotional ideas. Filmmakers distribute their own films and make their own YouTube channels. Musicians have been way ahead of the curve on this one – they have always kept good track of their fan lists.
- 2. But I am not alone.** There was a time when creative people felt frustrated because they didn't have every skill for success. Now they know they will collaborate across the board. It's become common practice to hire smart people to help you out; it shows how smart you are.
- 3. It's OK to invest my own money.** Because if you don't believe in your work, no one else will. Creative work often costs far less than entrepreneurial efforts, so advantage artists on this point. Creators also have learned the biggest benefit of self-investment: you keep your intellectual property rights.
- 4. Because it's not about getting the money.** Entrepreneurs figured this out a long time ago: it's about creating value or the probability of value. Creators are catching on. You don't need to get money to make your movie. You need to show how much value your movie will have and

you'll get your money.

5. I don't need a big corporation. Big corporate structures are fine for some things – they can spend \$100 million on marketing and launch giant culture-commodities. But they are slow and, by nature, conservative. Artists and entrepreneurs are fast and risk-prone. That's why they're fun.

6. I can do it better than a big corporation because I am more focused, more involved and more nimble. Yes, you are. Big innovation and big creative leaps don't come from big companies. They come from scrappy people working outside of large structures.

7. My market is my audience – not my exhibitor. Big companies think of the middleman as their market. They make widgets to sell to Wal-Mart, or movies to sell to theatre chains. But creators have learned that the audience is their true market – in the language of technology, it's all about the end-user.

8. I have to reinvent myself before I invent my next project. People who are truly creative and entrepreneurial don't like to repeat themselves. They will get bored if they have to climb the same mountain. So they continually train, learn, make, re-make, destroy and start over. Because next time, it will be different, and better.

9. Promoting myself and my work comes with the territory – and it can be fun. Finally, finally, artists are getting over their shyness and insecurity, and feeling comfortable talking about themselves and their work, and sharing more and more of it. This has been a hard one to overcome, especially because we live in a society where so much criticism is thoughtless and cheap. But as creative people are coming out of hiding, they're discovering that even though selling their work themselves is a necessity, it is also a fulfilling experience. They're discovering that audiences like to get to know them. They're discovering how much their work can be appreciated by others.

10. If there's no passion, I shouldn't be doing it. On this, entrepreneurs and creative people always agree.

Image from [The Red Machine](#), the movie made by the filmmakers I had coffee with, Stephanie Argy and Alec Boehm.

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