



CREATE A BUSINESS YOU'RE PROUD OF

Do you ever wonder ...

"If only I would be more visible, and my profile would be greater, then ..."

I can get more interest.

More traffic to my website. More visitors to events.

I could charge better prices for my beautiful products and services.

Then I could make a living with what I love doing!

So, where do you start if you want to stand out from the crowd?

I recommend these three practical steps:

Step 1: Do you know what you want to be known for? One of the biggest challenges for new creative professionals is that you aren't sure yet what you are about. It's natural. It takes time.

The first couple of years after you start your business you need to figure out what your 'special talents' are, and who your ideal clients are.

It takes a lot of trial-and-error to find out who you really are, and what you are about. You might find yourself three steps forward and two steps backwards. That's really common.

If you want to be professional then you will need to set yourself some goals of what you want to achieve, you need to be persistent, willing to try and fail, learn from your own mistakes and get feedback from real-life clients to find out what you are really good at.

It happened to me! When I took over The Design Trust I wrote a simple, one-page business plan with my specific goals for the first 6 and 12 months. When I reviewed them I was astonished as the reality turned out to be very very different!

Themes and projects that I thought would work really well, completely flopped. Client groups that I thought would be interested, were interested for free sessions, but didn't convert to buying. While certain client groups I wasn't expecting much business from where really keen. And some things really really worked. Although I



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have been working in this field for over 20 years I still get it wrong sometimes, but the more specific I have become in what I do and HOW I do it, the easier it was to get clients.

So, learn from my mistakes, and get into action right now: Write down what you want to be known for specifically. What are you really good at? Not just your creative skills but your people skills, your background, your values. Go in some depth and look at unique combinations.

What makes you different - and especially better - than your competitors? Identify around 8 creative businesses whose work is very close to yours and try to get really specific on what each of them are known for and what makes them stand out. It's often far easier to see this for others than for ourselves, so this creative exercise can really open your eyes by comparing yourself with others in a positive way!

Don't just think about WHAT you do (there are soooo many precious jewellers and textile designers out there!), but WHY and HOW you do it that makes you different. Why did you start your business? Which materials and techniques do you use? But also think about the broader culture of how you operate and what you are ultimately creating with your business.

Basically this question is about: What is your niche?

I am a big believer in focusing on a niche, so that you are really clear on what you do and for whom. Take your time for this exercise, and talk to others who know you and your work well to get their feedback. So often others can see things we can't ourselves.

Step 2: Who are your clients? Do you know who your clients really are?

The next step is to look at your clients and go beyond the basic demographics of their gender and age. The buying patterns and habits of people interested in design and craft has dramatically changed in the last 20 years. It used to be very predictable who would buy, but things have changed!

Do you know where your clients live? Who they live with? What the style of their house is? Or if you design fashion or fashion accessories: do you know what they wear and what brands they have in their wardrobe?

Do you know where they purchase your type of products and services? When they are most likely to buy? Why they would buy? For a special occasion or is it a gift?

[You can click here to download one of my favourite exercises](#) to get to know your dream clients much better. It's called the *Buyer Persona* exercise. Identify around 3 - 5 different client types and then answer the questions for each of them to help you get to know them much deeper (One sheet per client type). Some questions will be more relevant than others, but it's a good starting point to find out who your clients are,



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how to get in touch with them, and what other products they might like to purchase from you in the future.

If you do this creative exercise then do get in touch! I would love to hear what you learnt.

Step 3: Do you communicate confidently who you are and what your strengths are? After you have discovered what you want to be known for and who your clients are, then you need to work on communicating that confidently to attract your ideal clients and turn interest into sales and orders.

Have you got an up-to-date website that you are proud of and that reflects what you do professionally? With product descriptions and images that are 'just right'?

Or are you avoiding your website or online shop? Is your website pretty boring and not that interesting (let's be honest, many creative websites are very boring!)? Do you need to delete old products and images, and give it a good Spring clean? Do you need to add more info about yourself, and an image of you in your studio?

Create better products to show off your skills? Or get more creative with developing products that your clients really love to buy, and there isn't that much else in the market? But you know what they want because you have done your research?

Does your styling of your images reflect who your clients are or even better: who they want to be? Does your packaging tell your story and make you look affordable, luxurious, eco-friendly, creative or what ever you want to say?

Does your Instagram attract your ideal clients and reflect how you look at the world? Do you know what to write, tweet and blog about to attract your ideal clients? And to turn interest into sales?

Are you telling your story on WHAT you do, WHY and HOW? Confidently and clearly? Without any need to show off, shout or reveal too much?

There is a lot to think about and so many creative things you can do to show who you are so much better, and to attract your ideal clients and ... yes! **Stand out in the market!**

Do you feel overwhelmed by working on your brand in that detail? You don't really know where to start, and you have got limited time and money?

Or **have these jobs been on your mind for a while**, but somehow you never have made the time for it? 'Someday' you will do it?



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Do you want my help to give your business a boost of clarity - for you + your clients?

To identify your values and ideal clients?

To see loads of creative ideas by other creatives and turn your boring or not-very-clear website into something you are proud of?

To create a plan with clarity and consistency with how you communicate who you really are - from the selection of your products and services, to your website and your social media? And also branding your newsletters and creating a WOW display at your next event?

On Thursday 20 April I will be hosting for the very first time [a one-day online workshop on *Practical Branding & Story Telling for creative businesses!*](#)

Branding & story telling are very hot topics right now for creative businesses!

Working on your brand is so creative and a lot of fun, but many creatives often don't know where to start. How to turn your values and ideal client insights into the right look. How to turn your creative ideas into a coherent plan. And how to do it on a shoestring budget!

[Get more details about this one-day online *Practical Branding* workshop here.](#)

Ready to work on your brand with me? [Book your place on this practical but strategic workshop here.](#)

In one day you will work on your brand strategically + practically with me. Identify your unique brand values, get loads of ideas + create your own practical branding plan.

Because you want to be professional and stand out from the crowd!