

HOW TO DO BUSINESS DIFFERENTLY EPISODE

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach, and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives, are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:34.9] CS: Hello, welcome back to another episode of the creative empire podcast. Reina and I are talking today about how to break the mold in your business. We have got at least eight actionable strategies that you're going to be able to take away today and use to start switching up the status quo and do your business differently than the rest of your industry.

[0:00:56.1] RP: Yeah. Yeah, hey, we're really excited to talk about this, I'm just like jumping in. One of the reasons why I think we wanted to record this was that we constantly see people who have ideas but they're you know, complaining that other people have copied them or they're just doing things the same way that everything has always been done.

Unless you're in a brand-new industry obviously but we see this quite often and I see this quite often with coaches, I see this quite often with photographers and wedding planners. Let's talk about this. Christina, you're really good at being kind of like, you use the word contrary but just seeing how we can do it differently and looking at different things. Tell us about what your perspective is?

[0:01:41.1] CS: Yeah, I like to go to the blue ocean to make like the analogy that everybody knows. I am actively always seeking out gaps and issues and asking why those gaps haven't been filled yet. Is it because there's no market for that gap, is it because no one's thought about that gap, is it just because whatever it might be.

What I'm always looking for is like high need, low competition right? That was how I got started as a creative attorney kind of by accident but at the same time it's like looking back, evaluating where do people need something and no one is fulfilling that need or you know, there's ideally at least one or two other people that are fulfilling that need but maybe there's something that they're doing that you could do better.

[0:02:27.8] RP: Yeah, I totally agree with that. I mean, when you approached me about this podcast, that's exactly what I remember about our conversation is that you said, no one else is doing this, there is a need, there is a hole in the industry and I'm yeah, just looking back on it a year ago, we had that conversation and...

[0:02:44.6] CS: I love doing this for other people too, I've done this with Jessica Rasdel, I've done it with Ashlyn Carter.

[0:02:49.8] RP: You can do it with me later.

[0:02:51.3] CS: Yeah, I know, I love doing this right? I remember Ashlyn and I were at – she talks about this in her public talk so I'm okay sharing it but she and I were at lunch and she was like doing her calligraphy business and her copywriting business and she was telling me how the calligraphy business was kind of keeping things afloat at the time, it was higher paying clients, whatever.

I just looked at her and I said, it's not scalable, there's only so many invitations you can address a month and you're going to make what? X amount of dollars and she's like yeah, people need launch copy right? I was sitting there and I'm like, I want to hire you to map out my funnels and write my launch copy because I don't have time to do that and I'm not – that's not something I want to learn is how to funnel map and add the copy.

[0:03:37.6] RP: Yeah.

[0:03:39.2] CS: Guess what she's doing now? And it's scalable and it's great because there was such a need in the industry and the same thing with Jess, she was like, I don't know, I do a

lot of public speaking, I remember having a conversation with her at Savvy I'm like, why don't you teach me about public speaking? I don't know anything about it and the way she approached it was so different and I love that she approached it as a business product almost.

In that there's a whole system, there's things that happen and so now she's, you can go...

[0:04:07.7] RP: She's got the speaker blueprint.

[0:04:09.7] CS: Right, you can go and hang out with Jessica Rasdale and she will insider her course or is it a course or program.

[0:04:15.2] RP: Both, yeah.

[0:04:17.0] CS: She's going to walk you through what it takes to be a speaker on those stages, on those conference platforms and how to pitch yourself and that was a gap in the industry. I'm trying to do it to Laura Foot's husband right now.

They're both actors and actresses by training. Jordan has this amazing ability apparently to recognize what someone is doing with their breath and their voice. Why doesn't he teach a course on that? Because that's like something that needs to be filled is like, even in this podcast right? I'm very conscious about how my voice sounds, you guys have probably all heard recordings of yourself and you're like, I hate that.

Well why do you hate that? He's able to look at that and say, well you don't like it because of XYZ or because you are actually holding your breath at the top of your lungs. That's my next investment is working with him and learning how to actually talk, sounds really weird but if you're going to be doing Facebook lives, if you're going to do a podcast, if you're going to do anything where you're...

A speech, we go back to Jessica's program, if you're going to be a speaker, you need to learn how to talk in a way that isn't grading for people, isn't, that's really inviting and wants them to hang out with you. Yeah.

[0:05:27.2] RP: Well side note, I don't think your voice is grating or turns people off. I think you're good but that's a cool investment.

[0:05:33.2]CS: Do you guys want to know a secret?

[0:05:36.0]RP: Yes, obviously.

[0:05:37.4]CS: Okay, when I started like on this entrepreneurial thing, I did not get a nose job. I wouldn't do that.

[0:05:43.2]RP: What?

[0:05:44.8]CS: I did not get a nose job. But my voice is so nasally because I had been hit in the face by a horse, I'm not kidding. I had been hit in the face by a horse, it had deviated my septum and apparently I had this like other weird stuff going on.

[0:05:59.1] RP: Did you get rhinoplasty?

[0:06:00.4] CS: No, I did not. I went to an ENT and totally cleared things out, it was the worst surgery I've ever had in my life. I had my jaw wired shut just for comparison in high school. It was the worst surgery I'd ever had.

[0:06:13.4] RP: My gosh.

[0:06:15.5] CS: It totally changed my voice, I wasn't nasally anymore and you guys don't know this because this happened before the podcast and all that but I was so self-conscious about my nasally voice that I went and I like, got it fixed, it also fixed all my migraines so good...

[0:06:29.2] RP: That's amazing.

[0:06:29.8]CS: Yeah.

[0:06:30.9] RP: That's amazing. ENT's for the win. I think you should do innovation coaching, that's something that I think you should do in general. Okay, I'm excited to be on the spot to have you do this for me. Anyway, let's dive right in in terms of like, what we wanted to tackle on this episode was to question how you're supposed to do something in your industry and I think there's a lot of ways that are quote unquote "standard" or the ways that I don't know, people in the past have done it.

We just don't question it, we don't question how that came about or why people do it that way or what is it that we are doing and how does that impact our clients now, we just kind of keep doing it the way that our moms used to do it or whatever. I think there are better ways of doing things yeah?

[0:07:18.7] CS: Yeah, I see it where people are really excited to be entrepreneurs so they get into the industry, they want to have that wedding planning business or they want to have that photography business, whatever it might be. They're like, okay, I did the thing. I kind of went full time with my photography business or you know, I'm doing it on the side as a side hustle, it's a thing now and that's where they stop right?

I'm not really sure why because you took the big risk to invest in the photography equipment or you took the big risk to take on a client for the first time. I'm not really sure what happens, I think maybe it's kind of like when people get rich and like someone that didn't – no, seriously.

People don't have money and then all of a sudden they have tons of money and now they're like hoarding it and they don't want to give any of it away whereas before, they were living out of a shoebox and didn't care. I don't know if it's like that, I mean, I'm not a psychologist, you have a background in social work so maybe you know more about it but like, I just don't know why we get so far but not any further.

[0:08:20.3] RP: Interesting. I think that it's maybe personality based but I think there's a lot of fear in doing it differently. Your point is that you're already breaking the mold by being an entrepreneur, keep breaking the mold so that you can do it differently than the people that are doing it alongside you or in competition to you right?

There is lots of tactical ways of doing that and Christina, you had an example about like, how we built our clients.

[0:08:48.0] CS: Yeah, for sure. I know that you and I both love payment plans and people think we're crazy. People are like, what do you mean, you're an attorney and your clients are on payment plans and I just say, I charge a flat rate right? So it's easy, no one's like surprised and then they know what to budget for over the next whatever, eight months, a year.

People love it, I was just speaking at True Vie and there was so much resistance around payment plans because – just so you know, True Vie is a workshop put on by Riana Bossy for wedding planners and so the wedding planners that were there were all like super amazing women, they're up to some really great stuff like their businesses are definitely going somewhere but one of the things that they had the biggest resistance around was payment plans.

I asked them, you know, how do you invoice your clients and they would say, well 50% due on signing and then 50% due the month of the wedding. I asked them like why don't you go payment plan and they're like, I don't know, I don't really like the experience the client would have getting a monthly bill, that just seems like really icky to me to send them a bill every month and I said, well do you think they're having a good experience paying \$4,000 today and then \$4,000 like the month of their wedding when they're stressed as hell?

[0:10:07.2] RP: Like the week before their wedding?

[0:10:09.9] CS: Do you think that's a good client experience? You know, some of them are more like yeah, they were fine with it but some of them were like, maybe that doesn't make sense, maybe, I mean, we, all of us are already paying monthly bills right? We all have subscriptions whether we acknowledge it or not, you have a cellphone, you have internet service, you have Netflix, whatever it is that you're paying for on a monthly basis and I don't know about you but every time I get my monthly bills or every time I pay for my water I'm not like – crap, that stupid water bill, I can't believe I'm paying for that.

I'm like good, I have water in my house so I can continue to shower. You know, I'm not really sure where the resistance comes from, I think it has more to do with money mindset than client experience but we kind of like pawn it off on client experience.

I don't know, you guys, I would love to hear from you, hello@creativeempire.co. What's going on? Why are payment plans so hard? What do you think Reina?

[0:11:07.3] RP: I love payment plans, I think the quickest way for you to achieve like the mythical five figure income per month is to do the payment plans rather than having huge spikes in very low low's. We see this a lot with wedding industry folks who have cyclical payments right? You get a huge payment in like before the spring or something or you know, in the fall or whatever.

Whenever your booking time is and then you have like nothing until wedding season. That can be painful. Unless you're really good at rationing that money or making sure that that money stretches, you're going to be in a fit of trouble and so I think I'm such a huge fan of having these monthly kind of money's coming in and knowing that being able to have that kind of recurring, not recurring but just money coming in on the dot every month.

[0:12:03.0] CS: It does, that's – I always say this. Personal finance is like a skill that you have to learn, it's not innate and you know, that was hard for me because I wasn't good at budgeting and I wasn't good at, or as Shana Skidmore calls it, making a spending plan on a budget. I think why are we already kicking ourselves when we're down and forcing ourselves when we're not that great at figuring out our personal finances when we're starting out.

Why are we already kicking ourselves more down and making it even harder for ourselves to figure out how to spend our money or how to budget in more familiar terms.

[0:12:42.3] RP: Can I also talk about like wedding industry stuff? This is like such a personal pain point for me but like, I really did not like to pay for my wedding in checks. It's just such an antiquated way of doing it, if you're still accepting checks, please just increase your prices so you don't have to make me pay in cash. It's the stupidest thing.

[0:13:03.1] CS: It's unprofessional.

[0:13:04.3] RP: It totally is and I was like, this is – I got married in 2011 I was like, what in the world, why am I still paying for stuff like \$5,000, \$10,000 in cash, it makes no sense to me, take credit please. That's just such an easy thing. Increase your prices so that you don't have to worry about that stuff.

[0:13:22.3] CS: That was interesting because that was also a conversation that I've had recently, not at True Vibe but recently and people said, well my clients actually like paying in checks so I'm going to keep doing it and I said, well have you ever given the option to pay in with a credit card? No.

[0:13:38.2] RP: Also, they get points, come on.

[0:13:41.8] CS: Just making – the easier you can make the whole process right? It would mean a lot more to most of your clients who are doctors and lawyers, speaking from experience, it would mean a lot more to them to be able to just setup automatic monthly payments to their credit card than to get a gift box full of paper and a candle.

[0:14:00.3] RP: Yup. Yeah, let's talk about applying gifts because I think that has kind of, I have heard a lot of like whisperings about people who are like, it's just getting out of hand. I think there's a lot of... What's that?

[0:14:14.0] CS: It is, Sorry guys, I have never had a client gift and like we send gifts actually for a podcast which I actually, I don't know of any podcast that do that. I don't know, maybe I'm not just on enough podcasts as a guest but I think the reason why I sent client gifts yet is just because one, I was getting my systems organized and in placed and two, I was really afraid to send them gifts actually because I was like, what if they think I'm wasting their money?

Kind of like my in between that I'm going to be doing now is just like a very small client gift that I can basically automate. I don't know, you're a huge gifter.

[0:14:53.8] RP: It's just my love language, I like to do that but I think I like to do it because it's a surprise not because it's like a lavish gift. I don't think that the gift that I send to my clients are all that lavish, I think it's just like fun for me to do it so I just do it.

Also, I change it up because I think that I have long term clients and I don't want them to get the same gift like multiple times. I have a lot of different creatives who have kind of these things and I just like to surprise people. I don't know, I'm not harping on gifting, I think I'm harping on like you have to do it because everyone else is doing it kind of a mentality.

Or like that it has to be this big ordeal. Yes it should be an experience because your clients aren't going to be going through hopefully a wedding or this kind of thing over and over again. You want that to be the experience but like let's think through the entire process rather than just like this one particular time in that journey.

[0:15:48.0] CS: Yeah, for sure. I won't say who it is out of respect for them but I was having a talk with somebody who is like a big person in the wedding industry and she was just like really upset, she's like, if I get one more candle or card, or like whatever that I can't use.

I'm not even kidding guys, she's got like a stack of just like gift boxes in a corner and I guess it's very sweet and cute but what was – she got something else, someone gave her something that was really practical, like they gave her like a meal – they have like a meal delivered to her house like a wake-up meal or something.

That was a gift that was super helpful when my baby was like crying and I had nothing to do. I can just pour all the stuff together and make a meal. That was the gift that she really enjoyed and so you know, maybe thinking about it differently where everybody else...

Now, somebody – let's just say your wedding planner right? Your client is working with you, a photographer, maybe a videographer, maybe I don't know, like a custom dress maker – I don't know who they're all working with but you're sending them a gift and the photographer's sending them a gift and the videographer's sending them a gift.

They're getting all these different gift boxes. What if you thought differently and you were the person who didn't send like the gift that they're going to forget about in a month but you sent like I don't know, like a videographer in my area holds a dinner for his couples and hires a baby sitter.

[0:17:14.7] RP: I love that. I need that.

[0:17:17.5] CS: I think yeah, I don't know, his like best friend is like a chef or whatever so they worked out a deal. It's like a private dinner for the couple and it's just like a thank you and they get to watch their video from their wedding, it's like a video reveal and the babies at home safe with the baby sitter.

That's the other – I say I don't give client gifts but I actually do at the end. When my trademark clients get their registration and comes in like a really pretty package and I frame it and all that kind of – it has a bass print in it.

[0:17:46.6] RP: That's cute, yeah.

[0:17:48.9] CS: It's really cute but I think just thinking maybe more practically instead of traditionally right? Just because everybody else is sending the same gifts. Working with somebody like Jamie from Marigold and Grey, that might be really helpful to talk to her and say like, I want something that's way different.

I want something that they can use. Maybe it's not a candle but it's like, some kind of like useful kitchen utensil, I don't know.

[BREAK]

How would it feel if someone laid out a business plan, a road map or some kind of strategy that would get you started and get you closer to the goals that you dream of accomplishing in your business? Well Reina and I have actually done this. So all you have to do to get this totally free resource is head to creativeempire.co and click on "free workbook". We will deliver to you 50 of our most potent powerful strategies and proven tactics to getting our businesses visible, booked

and profitable. So if you would like to have this in your business for totally free, you can grab that at creativeempire.co. We'll see you there.

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[0:18:58.4] RP: Yeah, I like that. There is just so many ways that you can break the mold and we just need to get creative I think.

[0:19:04.8] CS: It's so ironic.

[0:19:07.4] RP: Yeah. Just like, I'm always thinking about like people who are innovating and people who are doing things differently and saying like, yeah, I could totally do this, my husband is obsessed with Elon Musk and so he's like the pinnacle of innovators right?

I love the fact that people like that are able to say I don't care if no one's done this. I don't care if you think I'm crazy. I'm still going to do it anyway and make it be a banging success which I just have so much admiration for.

[0:19:40.1] CS: Yeah, I think everybody loves Elon Musk.

[0:19:44.4] RP: Dave is very obsessed with him, it's quite funny but anyway.

[0:19:47.1] CS: That's awesome.

[0:19:49.0] RP: Yeah, I think too, another way of thinking about innovation too is like, Christina, you're really good at this. Don't look at your industry, don't look at your competitors after a certain point, that's like really not helpful right? You're really good at looking at different industries like photography and you know, other things. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

[0:20:08.0] CS: Yeah, for sure. When I was starting in this industry and I was like, do I want to be a blogger, a graphic designer, calligrapher. I went to photography conferences. I didn't want to be a photographer but I went to like photography workshops and conferences because it's all the same thing right? A service based business is a service based business and I was like

learning from people that were like willing to be super candid because I wasn't stepping on their toes.

If you're a wedding planner, go to photography conferences, you're going to make better connections to people that are going to refer people to you than a wedding planner conference and you're going to learn better stuff, you'll be ahead of the curve in whatever it is that photography conference is teaching.

I did this with a blog conference right? I went to DIY blog conference in Atlanta called Haven. Probably two or three years ago. I cannot even put together IKEA furniture without it being a disaster, the doors are on backwards, whatever.

I went to a DIY blogger conference which is like, these people are like building houses out of refurbished doors or something. I don't even know. It's crazy but I went because it had sessions on SEO and it had sessions on getting published and all these other topics that were super helpful and that was like one of the best investments I've ever made, that was like a \$250 conference and no, I didn't network, I didn't get anything out of it like that but I learned all about SEO.

I learned about how to grow organic Facebook reach. You know, just because it says like for wedding planners or for DIY bloggers, you better have your own house built out of the weird doors that you found on the side of the road. Just because it says that, it's not for you.

Okay, is it really not for me? Is it going to be like an Indesign conference where all they do is teach me Adobe Indesign? I am a wedding planner. That's probably not helpful but if it's something that they're going to have sessions or it's a related field and it's a service based industry in you're service based industry.

Go to those things, I went to the national stationary show last year, I didn't have any desire to start a stationary store, just wanted to see like what was trending so that I could help my clients better.

[0:22:15.5] RP: Yeah. I love that. I think too, you're talking a lot about conferences and I think we should talk a little bit about the investments that we're making, a lot of people will invest in people who are ahead of them like mentoring, ahead of them in the same industry.

I think investing in people who are different than you or have different skillsets than you but are kind of still ahead in the kind of work that you want to be doing can also be really helpful as well as attending conferences like Christina's saying that don't necessarily have direct applicability, those things can change the way you see the world, change the way you see your industry and the way that you run your business and that can be really helpful.

Not only for your profit margin but also like the client experience. That just makes the results of what you do, it can enhance the way that you do things I think.

[0:23:03.9] CS: Yeah, for sure. I mean they're able to have a better outside perspective than somebody that is even in the industry. So they are able to call into question certain things, maybe pricing practices or client experience. Right now I am super heavily following a bunch of Shopify platforms since I'm moving there and I sell digital products so why am I looking at Shopify? Because it's giving me an outside perspective to selling online.

So I don't know, please get out, find people that can be your mentors outside of the industry. If you can't afford the investment, listen to their podcast, listen to whatever it is but yeah, I don't know if you have anything else to talk about with that point. My next point was be a contrarian. To a fault, I know this is one of my problems is that I tend to go a little bit overboard which by the way, Lynn Stevens was speaking at TREVI and she totally diagnosed why this is happening for me.

She had this really cool thing called Wed Type, so all of you guys check out her website, it's Things Splendid and splendidinsights.com and those are her two sites. I forgot which one the Wed Type platform is connected to but it's so cool. Basically she talks about these four different types of brides that you will encounter or four different types of people that I should say not just brides that you will encounter as you are going through your business as a, whatever it is.

As a creative, as a wedding planner, obviously she focuses on the wedding industry but these are applicable. I asked her, these are applicable across genders, across everything except for culture. This is distinctly American culture from what I understand maybe a little concurrently but it was really interesting because if you are selling anything, these four types are going to be integral to what you are selling and one of the types was talking about –

She talks a little bit about a type called the driver and I won't go too much into each one just because I want to have her on and have her talk about this but yeah, so the driver is somebody that doesn't have any moderation in their life and that's totally me. I just said on another episode that my balance is killing myself for four days and then taking three days directly off. There is no moderation there and so one of the things that I tend to do was I delve a little too deep on to the contrarian end of things.

I get a little jaded and I have to pull myself back in but I think if you're a really positive person or you're just always happy looking for the best in people then this is going to be a little bit harder for you but you can still do it. Look at why – I always look to see what is someone doing and what sucks about it like why are they doing that. I'm always looking to answer that question and sometimes, there is a really good answer. Sometimes they are very well versed in whatever that subject is.

And they know a lot more than I do and they are doing it for a very specific reason and sometimes or most often, they're just doing it because everybody else told them to do it that way. So I think it's okay to be a little bit jaded and contrarian.

[0:26:24.5] RP: Yeah, I think too. Well I would say that I am that person that's positive and sees the good in things and I feel like I'm less jaded than you might be but I think there's a lot of placating. There's a lot of not questioning the sort of status quo and saying, "Hey I think we could totally do this differently and be frustrated because we all can be frustrated at certain points about how things are and just like it is in our households and our friendships and the real world.

All of these things and I think the industries that we are in is the same way. I think just saying "why the heck do we have to do it this way?" is fine and I think that it's actually a healthy

question to ask whether it's because you are writing content or you're producing this kind of material or the way that you edit photos or the kinds of colors you're using, whatever it is I think that it's really helpful to ask the question why am I doing it this way.

Who told me that I have to run my systems this way or how I run my team? Or whatever the question is, I loved when we had the conversation with Molly Superthor about she's a freelancer and she wants to keep it that way. She wants to stay a one person team and where there's so much conversation about build a team build a team, right? And who told her that she had to do it that way? And she's like, "Nope I'm not going to do it" and I love that.

So how can we question more of our things? Another thing that I wanted to say piggybacking off of that is have your own ideas. There's so many times when we want to – there is so much of this conversation around using similar language, using similar ideas. Obviously giving our own spin to it but try to think independently. I'm at fault for this too sometimes but our Instagram captions look the same. Our Instagram pictures look the same and I think we have to have our own ideas.

We have to think about things in the world rather than reacting to other people's content or other people's stuff.

[0:28:39.6] CS: Yeah and everything that you try does not have to be permanent.

[0:28:44.6] RP: Yeah, for sure.

[0:28:46.4] CS: So if something is not working, if you are not getting clients or you're not making the kind of money that you want to make, then why not just try it? You've already not doing the thing that you said you wanted or that you were going to do. So give yourself some kind of time limit, minus three months. I try everything for three months and after three months if I don't see results or I don't see any kind of traction like I hired an SEO company at some point.

I didn't see any kind of results, I didn't see any kind of traction, they were gone so it doesn't necessarily have to be like they move me from point A to point Z but I need to get to point D or F.

[0:29:21.9] RP: Yeah if you're making that kind of invest for sure. I think another thing too is that no one cares.

[0:29:27.7] CS: Such a good point. I know.

[0:29:28.6] RP: Like people are paying attention, no one is paying attention as closely to your business as you are. It's the same way that you feel about your inbox or the emails you're getting or the things that people are doing. Yes, you might see cool things that these big leaders are doing but no one is paying so close to your pricing or maybe they are or to the way that you are running things that if you change something you have to make a huge announcement about it.

Or feel like there is a huge disappointment, you know it's really not that big of a deal so do it differently, do you is kind of my point here.

[0:30:01.7] CS: For sure, yeah. It's a great point and if anybody is paying that close attention, they will let you know. You will hear from them, don't worry they will let you know and you just deal with it. It's like okay, we have 500 new saleable's and one person isn't happy or whatever, 15 new sales maybe that is more realistic but just deal with that one person and you're not going to make everybody happy. If you feel like that is a problem then you may not want to be an entrepreneur.

[0:30:34.6] RP: Yes, so true. I feel like we can have a whole episode about peaks and values in our businesses but yeah I think that is so on point. One of the things I was going to say is that when you feel like you are stifled or maybe are doing the things the same way as everyone else, thinking about collaborating might be a good idea because collaboration with people who are totally different than you can bring about such cool results and can yield in different types of product offerings.

Or different types of services together that you can do and I don't know, have you seen any good examples of this Christina?

[0:31:10.2] CS: Mariah Coz.

[0:31:13.2] RP: Yeah.

[0:31:15.1] CS: Her JV webinar strategy. Yeah, I mean that girl makes multiple seven figures a month, not month but a year at least, I don't know but maybe monthly but yeah, her whole strategy was how do I get other people on board to basically just let me sit there on her platform and sell. I think what you are talking about more is like actual projects that you collaborate on. I like JV webinars but –

[0:31:39.2] RP: Yeah, I mean that stuff too but I feel like, who was this that just did this recently? Oh like Shay with Laura and Megan, right? Shay Cochrane, the Etsy Stock Shop, they brought on a couple of different people that have never done this before and they are collaborating on something that's similar but different and it is bringing in a different flare to things. I had the opportunity last year to collaborate with a couple of different product makers on putting together Pencils for Promise products.

It was really cool to be able to do those things so that you have a different perspective. I am a service based person but by bringing in these other people I was able to create something that I wasn't able to offer before. So how can you differentiate what you are currently doing so that other people can come in and create something new?

[0:32:25.6] CS: Yeah, I think it's all about finding those complimentary people and professions. I think Shay's example is a great example and all three of them have been on the podcast before. If you want to check out their episodes or go check out Shay's site and see what we are talking about but yeah, that is a great example because Shay knows her niche which is flat lays and very limited desk-scapes I guess and Laura has obviously shopped for Laura Casey, for Emily Ley.

She was Emily Ley's exclusive photographer from what I understand for a while. So that's kind of her thing but I don't think Laura has any kind of flat lay work because that is not her thing and then Megan obviously is a phenomenal stylist. She's got her co-working space which I haven't see in person but –

[0:33:14.6] RP: It's so pretty.

[0:33:15.0] CS: Oh my gosh, yeah. She is just so great at designing and styling. So yeah, I think that is a great example of a collaboration where the three of them getting together all built something that none of them alone could have done. Shay has a very different style than Megan and Laura has a very complimentary style and so it got Shay I feel like out of her bubble where more and more stock photographers are popping up and it kept her in the same wheel house.

But also removed her from like, "Oh more peonies and pink and gold" right? It removed her from that monotony she had – I don't want to say she had fallen into but just her most popular –

[0:33:57.2] RP: It's just a different style yeah.

[0:33:58.2] CS: – Photos are her collaboration with these for wanting design. Those became her most popular photos and then she just moved in a different direction. If she had collaborated with Bonnie again it may have looked, I'm sure it would have looked a lot differently than her collaboration currently. I love that idea of collaborating and obviously they had a goal in mind. That's where collaborations get hung up is like, "Oh fun, we're working together".

But the three of them didn't have the time probably to just knowing, I don't really know Shay that well but I know Megan and Laura pretty well and Laura is about to have a baby and so is Megan. Everybody is pregnant.

[0:34:39.4] RP: Everyone is pregnant. I am not pregnant. I think that another thing too, this is my final point is about bringing your past into your business and differentiating that way. I think Christina you have done such a good way of doing this. I don't leverage my social work career, my wedding planning career all that much but I think that there is a lot of merit to saying and doing the things differently by using the knowledge that you already have.

In my past life I was a project manager and that is something that I use every day in managing my business but also helping my clients as well. So what can you do differently? I've been talking to Katel Schmitz of Revery Lane and Ilia Major who is my graphic designer and creative

director on my team and they have two different – they are both graphic designers and they have two totally different offerings which is so cool. So both of them do standard branding design in their own creative way.

But Katel is incredibly – her brain works as a project manager. Her master's degree is in project management and managing those extensive things and graphic design and so she has a very different standard protocol than Ilia does or any other graphic designer I know and she also does creative design – I'm sorry creative direction. So she layers on top of graphic design all of these different things and I think she is going to be leveraging more of that because I don't think she's been talking at all that much.

And then on the other hand, Ilia is doing – I think she is seeing other industries like coaching, doing these intensives and she is doing a branding intensive which I think nobody else is doing. So if you want a brand in three days she will give it to you. You come to her in person and you sit down with her, you have three days of intense work around your values and vision and what the brand looks like and how it functions and all of that stuff.

And by the end of those two or three days you are leaving with a solid brand which I think is incredible rather than waiting months and months and months for a brand.

[0:36:41.9] CS: Yeah, I am going through that right now. It's so frustrating because I get it. You guys book up, you are good at what you do but just trying to find somebody but in reality, that's why Lauren Hooker is able to work so fast, she got really popular and famous in the industry because she was known for her three week start to finish branding and website design but it's because in reality in between all of those coffee breaks and networking and working on five client projects at once.

In reality if you broke down all the hours that it would take, it probably does just take three days to do the branding. It's just all at once and so I love that she is breaking the mold and doing something different and there's definitely a client out there that wants to take their time and gain inspiration over months but I don't know, we're also millennials. We're also a fast society and we're also really frustrated with the status quo of waiting.

I think that's why stock brands like on Etsy, the creative market do so well it's because they are available.

[0:37:50.4] RP: Yeah, the instantaneousness of it right?

[0:37:52.0] CS: Right, so that's awesome that she's doing that.

[0:37:54.8] RP: Yeah, I also think too I think a lot of graphic designers are frustrated by the fact and this is probably for every industry like not hearing back from their clients about feedback in order to move forward and if a graphic designer doesn't have feedback, they can't do their job and so I think Ilia is like identified something like a huge need for herself and her business and saying like, "No I am not going to wait. We're going to sit down together and get it done quickly". It is beneficial for me and for the client and I think it's so smart.

[0:38:24.8] CS: Yeah, Lauren Carns, the graphic designer because we have two Lauren Carns but Lauren Carns she's on my team as a graphic designer and she's been great because she started doing this Designer for a Day program and it's very straight forward. She was very clear that on these four days next month you have me as your designer. You can ask me questions, we can go back and forth, we can work on projects but before that date, I need everything that I need to get started.

And if I don't have that then that work doesn't get done that day and that day is lost and so that was definitely a learning process because we had switched over. So maybe it was easier for her newer clients but that's so great and I love that she has that boundary in place because one, I know exactly when the work is going to be done and that two, it's working more like a professional business. Magazines don't operate where they're like, "Oh yeah, we got this story that we need to write".

"And that the magazine is going out in a month so we should probably have it done by this day" no. Magazines have an editorial calendar where they say the story has to be on this date, it has to be edited on this date, the graphics have to be done by this date. So it's been really great to get into the flow of things and that was hard for her. That has to be really hard to put your foot down and not respond to client inquiries for last minute projects.

Because you are working with somebody else on that day, you're the other person's designer for a day and so it is hard on the short term and I think that's why it is scary and why it could be scary for you to make these changes but in the long run, she knows that she only has to work this many days a month and find clients on this many days a month. So it's been a really great shift for her I think and I love the brand intensive. These are such good ideas that other industries are doing.

Coaches do this all the time, coaches don't drag things out for months but that's just not the industry. So I love that, it sounds like she is really borrowing from the coaching mindset of like, "All right let's do this three day intensive and then maybe next quarter, we have another three day intensive for some other branding project" or something.

[0:40:33.3] RP: Yeah, I think it's really such a smart idea and we should be able to look outside of ourselves and say, "Hmm this is scary. I'm going to do it anyway" so I think there is a little mindset work that needs to be done too in order to break the mold and make sure that we are fulfilling how we want to work as well as what our clients expect from us, from the service as well.

[0:40:55.8] CS: For sure, this has been so good. Is there anything else you want to add before we wrap up?

[0:40:59.4] RP: No, that's all I had.

[0:41:01.0] CS: Okay, yeah. I think the last little quick win that I would give you guys is if you can invest in a conference especially in a different city, I would. I would do that and I would also only do it if you had some time afterwards to implement because one of the biggest mistakes that I made early on is going to conferences, loving all the information, maybe being a little overwhelmed and then jumping right back into things, catching right back up on emails and trying to get things done.

So if you do that, I would do it with a caveat of have a day or two afterwards to get at least the ball rolling and implement it because I think that could be a really quick win to get yourself out of

the headspace that you are normally in your office and your city and your town, out of your routine and really shake things up to give you that quick burst of all things could be different.

[0:41:48.9] RP: I love that. For sure and I don't think I've ever talked about this but I have a little plug. I have a course called conferencing better and it's all about how to make a decision about what conference to attend and then what to do during and after a conference to make the most of your time and most of your conference dollars.

[0:42:06.7] CS: Yes, so we will have links to all of that and anybody that we have mentioned on the show in the show notes. That's going to be at creativeempire.co and we hope that you all go out there, leave us a rating and a review. That makes a huge difference and we are able to get on the show and talk to you guys and the topics we are able to talk about. So if you do like the show, if you like the content, please do go leave us a rating and review. A rating only takes less than half a second and for everybody else out there, people who already left, thank you so much. Go build your creative empire.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:42:32.0] ANNOUNCER: Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads, and tips on how to do it, head to www.creativeempire.co, where you can find out more about this week's episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

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