

**EPISODE 138**

[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]

**[0:00:35.9] CS:** Hello! Welcome back for another episode of the Creative Empire Podcast. It's Christina and Reina here and I am actually recording in my car in Cody, Wyoming outside of Yellow Stone National Park. We're living our truth, I guess you would say. We're promoting this lifestyle and we're living it. Anyway, I'm really excited that it's not the focus of the show today. The focus of the show today is something that we've never done before, which is having an interview with a venue consultant.

Lindsay Lucas is the founder of Lean On Me Consulting and she's at [leanonmeconsultants.com](http://leanonmeconsultants.com), but she is going to tell you more about how she got into venue consulting, why her services are so important for anybody out there considering becoming a venue owner or maybe it's on your to-do-list one day, photographers out there. Let's get to it. Lindsay, welcome to the show.

**[0:01:31.4] LL:** Hi. Thanks so much for having me. I'm super excited to be here.

**[0:01:35.1] CS:** Yeah. Thank you. Can you give us a little bit of your background, your history. How you got into venue consulting, why you're qualified, because I know that, but the listeners don't.

**[0:01:46.0] LL:** Yeah, definitely. I have been in the wedding industry since 2011. I started a wedding planning business about a month after my husband and I got married. He saw how

much I enjoyed planning all of my friends' wedding, so he encouraged me to just take a leap of faith and turn it into a business.

At the time, he was in medical school studying to become a pharmacist. We were a single income household, which anybody who's done that knows how really fun that is. I have a stream of just being in the wedding industry, starting a planning company and I loved it. I made up my mind. I was going to do whatever it took to make that dream happen. There were seasons of me working no less than like three jobs at any given time just to keep Lean On Me alive.

Then I eventually was able to build a team underneath me. I started a few later, there was just this big boom of wedding venues. I think the corporate world caught the buzz of the wedding industry, saw how profitable it was, or on the flipside somebody inherited some land. I am Texas, so there is a lot of barns over here. I think that they just wanted to turn their property into an investment.

I started seeing this big boom of wedding venues come up, and because I already had the established planning company, a lot of the owners are reaching out to me to meet and get to know us a little bit more and put us on their preferred vendor list. Just through meeting and casual conversation they started to see me more as a friend and would just reach out with questions and asking for advice, what have I seen other venues doing. What have I seen that's been successful or what mistakes to avoid? I started seeing this huge need and I was loving, like being that friend that they were leaning on. Much like my planning company, I took another leap of faith and just started doing this, and it's been a blast.

**[0:03:49.9] CS:** For sure. What are some of the most notable, I guess, client things that you've learned as wedding planner and how does that relate to what you're doing now?

**[0:04:00.3] LL:** Yeah. Great question. As a planner, I've been on the vendor side, right? There's a part of our program whenever we're working with our venue owners, that it's a lot of education for them. Starting a venue in general is just a huge learning curve. Most people are learning about city permits and codes and water mains and electricity and all of the very unsexy things that go into starting a wedding venue. Those are things that they understand with construction or renovation they're going to run into speed bumps, but things that they don't think about is

how to work with vendors. How to treat them, not necessarily with respect, but it's very much a give and take industry that we're in. Educating them on the vendor side of things and how to create a great partnership is a big part of it.

**[0:04:52.7] CS:** For sure. That's one thing I feel like you're uniquely situated. Side note, we know most of our guest before we record, and I've been working with Lindsay for a while now and I know her business pretty intimately and it's really amazing, Lindsay, the things that you're able to accomplish with your wedding venues. You've not only accomplished an amazing amount. If we just look at the numbers either financially or the metrics that they wanted as key performance indicators, KPIs, or if we take a look at the way that you are able to facilitate those vendor-coordinating, like the vendors that you're coordinating to work with these venues, like connecting the dots so that it's not these vendors that are brand new and falling through the cracks. Ah! I can't talk. So that your new — These vendors are new and they're not just falling through the cracks and just kind of there for a weekend and then not. You're connecting these venues with really established vendors in the Houston area which I feel like can only come with your years of experience in wedding planning.

I think there's kind of two things I'd love to focus on as we chat here today. One is like what is this wedding venue thing. Why does everybody want to do it? Is it profitable? Is it a good idea? Has it missed its mark? What are your thoughts on that? I know what you might say, but I would love to just hear your thoughts. Then the other thing I'd love to focus on is like that was a big shift that you took in your career to go from managing a team, which by the way does how many weddings a year?

**[0:06:23.6] LL:** We do close to a hundred weddings every year.

**[0:06:27.8] RP:** Wow! That's incredible.

**[0:06:28.8] CS:** Yeah.

**[0:06:29.3] LL:** Yeah. We have a pretty large team, so it helps.

**[0:06:33.7] CS:** Yeah. Lindsay has just accomplished so much. One of the things that I'll have to do on this interview is tease that out, because she's very humble and sweet about it, but she's a fireman. Lindsay, when it comes to this venue thing, why is this so hot? Why does everybody want to get into this market? What would you tell someone that is maybe a photographer or some other kind of wedding vendor out there that's considering getting into this market? Is it worth it?

**[0:07:00.6] LL:** Yeah, absolutely. I love that you brought photographers and other creatives that are out there, because in my experience what I have seen most is that I have one to two different types of clients. One of the main ones is it is corporate investors that, like I said earlier, caught the buzz of the wedding industry. They see how profitable it is. They see that it's a no brainer and a great investment for them to make. They jump all in. They don't necessarily know the wedding industry. They don't know how to communicate with vendors. They certainly don't know how to communicate with brides. They're very much cold and very corporate, which is understandable. There's a lot of education that goes into teaching them about the industry itself and teaching them about brides, which I feel like it's kind of like a whole different species in themselves, how to communicate with them and everything.

On the flipside of that, like I said, I am in Texas and we have a lot of barn venues and a lot of them are families that have inherited lands from generations that have been passed down. They may not necessarily be farmers like the generations before them. They're had all these land and this barn and they don't know what to do with it, so they turn it into a wedding venue and start hosting weddings and they don't necessarily, again, know the ins and outs of the industry as well.

Going back to the photographers that you mentioned, or just creative entrepreneurs in general, within last year, I have seen this shift that I'm really excited about and it's more and more wedding vendors themselves, whether they're planners or photographers or whatever, are starting their own wedding venues. I think that it is just so smart and takes it up to a whole different level, because you know that you know us, you know the industry, you know brides. You're just helping that learning curve a little bit more. There's still going to be a lot of hard days with construction and just learning the ins and outs of all of that. Your bread and butter already

is selling to brides. You already know how to do that. I just think that it's so smart of them to be taking that leap of faith and starting it.

**[0:09:12.4] CS:** Here's the thing, especially for listeners of this audience. I'm totally guilty of it. What about people that take on too much? What is the right time to maybe consider starting — When is the right time to start considering to work with maybe — I don't know what the right way to phrase this question is. It's a weird question, but what's the right time to start considering when to start a wedding venue, essentially?

**[0:09:37.4] LL:** Yeah. That's a little bit of a tough question, because I know everybody's journey is a little bit different. A lot of people — I encourage everybody, do your research. I have clients or just like wedding industry friends that have just kind of picked my brain a little bit and said, "I'm thinking about doing this. I don't know if it's smart. What are your opinions on it?"

With some of them that I'm like more intimately friends with, they're comfortable with me taking a look at their books and we talk about what they're envisioning, what they're wanting, and I would encourage anybody to take a look at the market that you're in. See if there is a need for what you're ambitioning.

Where I am, there's a ton of barn venues and we need something different. We need an urban inner-loop appeal. Barns, we have plenty, so I feel like we need something a little bit different. I would just encourage anybody out there if they are interested in starting a venue and like what did your area need and what are you wanting to do, and does your market support it?

**[0:10:39.8] CS:** What are some of the things that if you're thinking about this and you're looking at it, you found a venue potentially that you could create or something that your market would support, everything that you're talking about here, right? Things are kind of moving along. You've maybe established a first business like you have with Lean On Me events, Lindsay, and now these people we're talking to in our audience are ready to move on for that second business, start that wedding venue. What are some of the most important things that they need to consider and why might they consider bringing on a consultant? What benefit — I don't mean to sound crude here, but what value are you bringing to them that they wouldn't otherwise be able to tackle on their own?

**[0:11:21.7] LL:** Yeah. For sure. With my experience with having Lean On Me events and starting the consulting side of things, that was a big shift for me. Honestly, the most difficult part for me was shifting into more of a CEO role with Lean On Me events. I think my hardest thing as an entrepreneur is asking for help. Building a good solid strong team around me and just trusting them and asking them for help has been huge. If you are a creative entrepreneur thinking about starting a second business, then I would encourage you to make sure that there aren't any giant holes in your current business and that it's well streamlined and automated and good to go and that you have a good solid team and foundation around you.

If you're wanting to start a wedding venue, definitely hire a consultant. Of course, I'm a little biased, but it's just like any other coach in a sense. They bring a different perspective. They bring experience and we're going to be able to save you a lot of headache and a lot of heartache and save you a lot of money.

I have had venue clients that have wanted to dump thousands and thousands of dollars into marketing advertisements, whether it'd be like different magazines or outlets or online platforms and we have to take a look at their brand, and that's something that they aren't particularly thinking of. They're distracted with all of the construction and all of the ins and outs of that. I really have to help them keeping in mind what and who they're aligning themselves with, whether it's marketing and advertising or whether it's other vendors in general.

**[0:13:05.1] RP:** Yeah. Your expertise is really in the specific different parts of a venue business it sounds like. Not only the client acquisition stuff building and permits and things that I would never even think to consider. When you're thinking about somebody who's like getting started in this, what are some of the — I don't know, major misconceptions or things that people overlook?

**[0:13:29.5] LL:** Yeah. Great question. I think a lot of things — Are you asking in terms of within the building process or just on the business side?

**[0:13:36.4] RP:** Anything. Yeah. There are so many different facets, right? Maybe you can just shed some light on — You're obviously not going to be able to talk to all of them, but if you can

— Just some of the things that people — Maybe the common things that people think are easy or just forget about or something like that.

**[0:13:51.5] LL:** Right. Yeah. With the consulting side, we are primarily focusing on helping the venues build a strong foundation for their business. We go in and streamline and automate and their get systems up and running. From what I have seen on the construction side, the biggest hurdles and holdups are within different city permits and codes and things like that which is different in every city, right? Some are more strict than others. If you're out in the country, it's a little bit more lenient.

As far as speaking to the business side, I think that a lot of venue owners are under the impression that you just have a website and all of these brides are going to magically find you and they're all your ideal clients and we need to just put our prices where everybody else is in our market. They don't take into consideration these venues that are priced at five figures for a Saturday night right off the bat. They have paid their dues. They've been here. They've gotten the experience and they've done the whole trial and error thing and they have enhanced their client experience in order to justify those price. We're seeing a lot of venues right out of the gate, they want to be at 10-5 or 12 just for the very pretty shell that it is and the tables and the chairs. They're a little shocked when brides just are turning away and going to all of these more established venues that [inaudible 0:15:15.1].

Another thing is that they don't build a connection. They're on the construction side of things, but they're not sharing that. I feel like clients and especially brides, they want that connection. If they are going to put their trust and faith in you that you are going to keep your word, your venue is going to be up and running and the time that you say it is, they want to see updates. They want to see that picture of dirt when you break ground. They want to see you what tile you're picking out for their bathroom. They're invested in you already, and I think that more venue owners should share like the not so sexy side of it too.

**[0:15:54.0] RP:** I kind of like that lesson for all of us, right? As business owners that don't necessarily have venues, I think that's still pertinent to showing the behind the scenes or showing people what they've kind of bought into is such an important part of the process and saying like, "Oh!" Whether it's shouting at a client that you have like Christina is doing or just

showing like, “Oh my gosh! Today was a terrible day and I really made a big mistake,” or like Christina is in — Where are you right now? You’re in Wyoming, I think?

**[0:16:22.5] CS:** Yeah.

**[0:16:23.2] RP:** Just sharing the behind the scenes of what’s actually happening is actually a really cool thing, because it takes people on the journey of what it’s like to be where you are. It helps people buy in to the bigger brand than just like, “Oh! Look at my pretty shiny venue,” and like, “look at my pretty shiny brand or whatever.” It really gives the human element and people get to buy into that. I think there’s some really valuable about that connection that you’re mentioning.

**[0:16:46.0] LL:** Oh, for sure. Definitely. I was listening to the episode with Mary and Justin just the other day that was released and she made the comment that there’s no such thing as an overnight success, and there really isn’t. I wholeheartedly agreed with that and I just feel like, “Oh, man! I have to share this story.”

The other day I was at the grocery store with my son and a friend that I haven’t seen in person in a while, we’re Facebook friends, and so she sees like all of these posts and things and she stopped me and was like, “Wow! You’re just killing it. I see all of these gorgeous pictures of pretty flowers and all of these big things you’re doing. Congratulations.” I know her personal journey, like she’s a little down on the dumps right now and I just wanted to be like, “Look. That’s not the norm. That’s not the everyday. We all have highs and lows and it kind of ebbs and flows too.” I really, really admire entrepreneurs that share the dirt work of things.

**[0:17:52.2] CS:** Today, we don’t really have a sponsor, but we did want to talk to you about a really cool product that was sent to us by a company called Sudio. That’s like studio without a T.

**[0:18:02.9] RP:** They’re in Sweden, right?

**[0:18:04.3] CS:** Yeah. They are. They’re in Sweden. They’re these really beautiful ear buds which have been very helpful for me because I’m constantly looking the non-plug-in. What’s the right word for this?



**[0:18:17.7] RP:** The Bluetooth version?

**[0:18:17.6] CS:** When you have an iPhone 7 and you don't have a plug for your headphones. You have to buy the ones without the plug. They were so gracious to send us a pair each. Of course, we picked like white with rose gold. Duh? They're gorgeous. What do you think, Reina?

**[0:18:32.3] RP:** Yeah, I love them. I think they're really pretty, and it's funny because I was travelling when they arrived and my husband opened them. He was like, "Oh! It's gold. It's rose gold and white. Obviously, it's for you." It came with a really cute tote bag, which I take all the time to go to Trader Joe's.

Basically, these are the kind of head buds you just like turn on and it's Bluetooth. You connect it and it's pretty easy to pair. It's pretty easy to charge and it holds a charge really well. I love using them when I can't have my phone right next to me or I don't want it to be super plugged. If you're using a — This is such a weird example, but if you're at the gym and you're using a rower and you're using one of those headphones that plugs in, then you're like attached to your phone. I like to use them when I'm like doing something or I'm walking around my house or whatever. Vacuuming is a really great example of when I can use these.

Basically, I listen to audiobooks and I will listen to podcast on these. If I pair it with my computer, I can watch a webinar on my computer, but walk away if I really needed to. It's kind of fun and great to have. I think they're really pretty and I think a lot of the head bud or ear buds are kind of ugly. It's kind of a nice change.

**[0:19:49.2] CS:** Yeah, for sure. The ones that I bought at the airport have like mittens attached to the side of them or something. They're hideous. Thank you so much to Sudio for sending these our way, and we will proudly wear this with pride because it's so cute. We would encourage you guys to go out and check out Sudio and see if they are something that you might be interested in purchasing too.

Today's reading and review comes from Scarlet As who said, "The speakers for this podcast are perfectly curated. The interviews flows so well and are chalk full of helpful information for creative entrepreneurs. This is the first podcast I've subscribed to and I'm in love."

Well, we are in love with you, Scarlet. Thank you so much for listening. If you want to have your business featured for free, just leave us a rating and review on iTunes. It takes about two minutes or less to find that baby in your app store. Click on us and leave us that rating and review. It means so, so, so, so much to us. Please go do that, and we would love to features on the podcast with your review. Thanks so much, Scarlet.

**[0:20:56.2] CS:** Yeah. The dirty work and just what actually their life is. I remember that when I was first starting out. The one thing that I wanted to know more than anything else wasn't like what tools they are using or what coach they were listening to or whatever. It was like, "What do they do when they wake up in the morning? What do they eat for breakfast? How do they structure their day?" It was like all of the secretes of the universe were held in their calendar, their agenda. If I could just look at that, I would have been immediately —

**[0:21:25.8] RP:** Can somebody start a podcast about that? I would totally listen to that.  
[inaudible 0:21:29.2].

That's true. I just want people on our industry. Yes.

**[0:21:36.4] CS:** Yeah. I know. Jena just did one like the other day where she was talking about what he day is like. Those are the kinds of things that I just wanted to see. I just wanted to be like, "Oh! So you do spend two hours writing a blog post. I'm not alone. Okay." That was the kind of validation that I needed. I love that you're encouraging other people to show what their life is like behind the scenes.

It's also really cool, because you didn't start out — You just knew that you loved weddings and you followed that passion and it sounds like that was a really hard journey, but one that was worth it at this point. It's really fun, because you didn't start out and declare yourself as a venue consultants. That was a process that happened overtime that you never would have been introduced to if you hadn't been in the wedding planning world and with these vendors and just

kind of being in the industry that you're in. Hopefully that's encouragement for people out there that are like, "I don't know what to do. I'm afraid to make the wrong choice," and it's like you can't really make the wrong choice.

What's been your experience with that and have you ever had those moments where you're like, "I don't know if this is like a thing," because you're really pioneering this industry. I haven't met in all of the thousands of people that I work with or talked to or email or whatever on a daily basis. I don't work with thousands of people on a daily basis. I'm not trying to say that. Just like the thousands of people that I email with every single week. I've never ever, except for you, encountered somebody who is like outright a venue consultant and with the kind of results that you've had. I know you haven't talked about that and I'm not sure if you're comfortable sharing some of the numbers on the show, but they're really phenomenal results that you've got in your clients.

What kind of advice would you have to somebody out there that's maybe thinking they're going down the wrong path or worried that they're pursuing the wrong thing? Is there something that they could do to help themselves feel rate the ship? Is there something they could do or that you did in your past that helped you?

**[0:23:38.2] LL:** I love this question so much. To answer it just directly, I would say yes, absolutely. The journey is totally worth it. Just a little bit of background to get some perspective, my parents raised me to be very strong-minded. Most people, whenever they are told they can't do something, it's easy for them to say, "Oh, yeah. You might be right. Maybe you see something that I don't see or maybe I am like blinded by this romanticized vision of this grand business." They let that self-doubt creep in, whereas my parents raised me to be the opposite.

The biggest thing that anybody can do to help me is to tell me that I can't do it, because, number one, it's going to light a fire and piss me off, and then I want to prove you wrong. Number two, it's like just going to ignite something in me, like something shifts and I'm just like, "No! I am going to do this and it's going to be freaking phenomenal. You just and watch."

I have encountered — I think that this is like so interesting psychologically, because from a venue consulting perspective, I don't work with just one client. When I'm working with a venue

as a whole, there's multiple people involved. There's investors who are usually men, and then there is like a venue manager or even a co-owner who is normally female, and it's so interesting to watch them interact together, because I can have the same conversations separately and go to the investors, go the men of the partnership and say, "We hit this roadblock here. Here is what I think we need to do with it. Here's what we need to look into. What are your thoughts?" They're like, "Yeah. Let's punch them in the face. Let's move forward. Let's go for it."

Then I have that same conversation with women and they become timid and they want to sit back and they want to analyze everything, which I'm not saying you should just make a rush decision especially with something as like of an investment as a wedding venue. There's more room for self-doubt with them.

As a woman entrepreneur myself, I just want to take those women by their shoulders and like shake them and say, "You can do this. You have everything that you need inside of you. Just push out the self-doubt and go toe-to-toe with it and you're going to beat it. You're going to do something great."

I've heard a lot of people speak about their why. Reina, you just sent out a newsletter today about that. I was reading it this morning before we jumped on the call, but I think it's incredibly important for somebody's why to be bigger than themselves. I know for me, my why is what wakes me up every morning especially on the rainy cold morning when I just want to stay snuggled in bed. Having your why be bigger than you and be about somebody else serving a greater purpose and serving others I think is key.

**[0:26:49.7] RP:** I love that. I think that your why can be resonant for so many industries, not just the service-based industry that I'm in, but for you as well, your service too. Thinking about our why is like such a powerful tool to bring us back just centered to say, "Okay. This thing that I'm coming up against right now, this roadblock, whatever it is, whether it's mindset or actual money things or whatever the thing is, can be overcome by the why."

Do you have any stories around like getting people past their roadblock by focusing on the why?

**[0:27:26.1] LL:** Yes. In this one example, my client's roadblock was also her why, which is kind of interesting. Her roadblock was that she had four children under seven years old and the time they couldn't afford daycare. Obviously, they are making this big investment and do a wedding venue, and so she was just saying, "I just don't think that we can do this. I have four kids at home and we need to be able to support them and provide everything for them."

I kind of flipped the table on her and I said, "What are your children witnessing you doing every single day? They might be little and they may not completely understand right now, but later on down the road they're going to look back on this hard time and they're going to see, "Mom and dad fought for this life for us. They fought for this dream and it's going to encourage them to fight for their own dreams later on." That kind of sheds some light and some perspective for her and she had a mind shift then.

**[0:28:27.0] LL:** Yeah. I think that plays in to that mom-guilt thing for me, like I put my son in daycare so that I can do this thing that I'm super proud of and for him to witness that, "Yup, it's totally possible for mom to have a goal and have a dream and to go forward into it and I can do that too."

Yeah, I think that's such a powerful thing to show your clients too. It's so interesting, because that's probably not part of your "job description" to get people past their obstacles, but it's just part of the work that you're doing and that's really remarkable."

**[0:28:57.0] RP:** Christina was trying to get you to focus on this a little bit, but I'd love to hear what the results have been for your clients. What can people expect if they work with you?

**[0:29:05.9] LL:** Yeah. We actually — I say we, because I'm so used of referencing my planning business, and there is a way, but in the consulting side it's just me, myself and I. I take my clients through a six-month program from start to finish and we cover all the things. We talk about their vision. We talk about profit planning. I do a lot of market research for them, pulling numbers. Have a very steep learning curve on social media and vendors and how to talk to brides. Client experience is a big thing. I introduce them to software systems and tools to streamline and automate their business, which a lot of venue owners that aren't in the wedding industry already are unfamiliar with, and so that is a little bit of a culture shock for them and just

sitting them down and going through to tutorials and things like that. Getting the system setup for them teaching them how to use it. It's a long program, but it's because we cover so much.

I think I saw an article that was like how to build a wedding venue in 30 days. I was like, "That's a lie!" because that's just false advertisement right there. There's no such thing as building a wedding venue in 30 days, and I think all great things take time. Wedding venue is no different.

As far as the results that I have given clients — Christina is right. This is a hard topic for me to talk about. Obviously, I can't name names or anything, but I feel like I'm tooting my horn and that's difficult.

**[0:30:37.3] RP:** We like that. Do it.

**[0:30:38.9] LL:** I know. I know.

**[0:30:39.7] RP:** We want to celebrate you.

**[0:30:41.1] LL:** Yeah. In that past 10 months, I have brought in over a million dollars in revenue for our clients. Some of them have been brand new venues that have been too low on their price points. Profit planning was huge for them. Other venues were already established, but I went in, took a look at their book, took a look at what they were doing advertising-wise, how they're putting themselves out there. We were able to increase revenue by 62% bring in an extra half a million dollars in six months, I believe.

Everybody's story is different. Everybody's situation is different, and I think that speaking, again, on why if you're starting a wedding venue, why you should hire a consultant is because they can take your situation, take the current place that you are in in your journey and show you how to get to where you want to be and hold your hand the whole way.

**[0:31:40.7] RP:** That is remarkable. Toot that horn. That is amazing.

**[0:31:44.4] CS:** I know. She's not even telling you guys like half of it.

**[0:31:49.3] RP:** Christina is like, “I’m going to tell all her secrets.”

**[0:31:51.2] CS:** I’m not going to tell you everything. That’s up to Lindsay. I’m going to respect that boundary. At the same time, I think it just goes to show that if you are struggling to make money and you’re like, “I’m bringing in revenue, but not profit.” A coach or a consultant, depending on what you need in your life is going to be hugely beneficial, especially one that can get as specific as this, right?

Lindsay only consults with venues. She doesn’t do wedding planner consulting. She doesn’t do, “I want to start a cake business, and I’m not sure how to do that.” She only does the venue consulting. I think that’s why she’s so successful of what she does, is because she doesn’t have her hand in 10 different pots trying to figure out 10 different industries, because let’s face it, if you want to become a custom cake designer, that’s a very different industry than a custom floral designer, a wedding planner at the heart of it. On the surface, yes, they’re both businesses. They both look the same, but underneath, especially when we’re talking here about, like you said Lindsay, all the building permits and everything that goes into the venue planning, they’re just huge. If you are struggling to make that profit, if you’re just bringing in revenue or you’re not making any money yet, I think that’s where a coach or a consultant is super helpful.

Then you have to ask them for those numbers. You can’t just go on your gut — Or even attorneys. You need to ask them for the numbers. You need to say like, “What is your success rate? What have your clients experienced in the past? How have they enjoyed working with you? Can I talk to them?” In this case where it’s really difficult for Lindsay to share who her clients are, because that would obviously jeopardize the business, what kind of results have they seen? What did they start with? What numbers were they at when they started with you? Where are they now? How fast did that happen?

I feel like, in a way, online courses are almost more risky, because you just have to trust the person selling it to you. Maybe they have a good refund policy. That’s even more reason to invest. With a coach or a consultant, you can actually ask them for those numbers. If they’re unwilling to provide you with anything, that’s a really big red flag for me. If they can say, “Oh, here’s this client. I can’t tell you who she is, because we accomplish X, Y, Z results.” That could be really, really helpful for you in deciding if you want to work with that person or not. It’s not like

the zero-sum game. You don't have to be romance by someone online. You can actually go to their website. You could talk to them. You can ask for numbers. I think that's one of the things that we try to forget about.

Lindsay, when we look back at your clients and why they work with you, what do you think the overwhelming reason is that they chose to work with you rather than doing it on their own?

**[0:34:28.2] LL:** Yeah. A lot of venue owners reach out to us because they're overwhelmed. They are overwhelmed with decisions that they have to make in all aspects of the business, and then they're overwhelmed, which this is a good overwhelm. They're having brides knocking down their door and they can't — They don't have any systems or anything set up. They can't manage all of that. Most venue owners, they don't have a team established underneath them yet. They don't have a manager. They don't have even a sales rep that's giving tours. They are wearing all the hats. They reach out to us asking for advice and how to take control of all of these.

Another thing is that venue owners get extremely overwhelmed with the amount of vendors that approach them, because as a vendor myself, obviously, we get super excited when there's a new venue opportunity in town that's going to be producing more business for us and we're wanting to knock down that door, but it's overwhelming for them.

I think just as a tip for vendors, how to work with a wedding venue is just offer to help in whatever way that you can instead of asking, "What can you do for me? Can you throw a business my way? I do this great thing. You should send me all your brides." Approach them from a helpful perspective.

**[0:35:49.5] RP:** Here, here. I totally love that. Nobody cares. Nobody wants to hear, "Oh, how can you help me?" But the best reach outs are the ones that are like, "I'm here to support you, whatever you need. Let's connect," and wanting that connection like you were talking about in the beginning.

**[0:36:06.9] LL:** Yeah. Definitely.



**[0:36:07.4] CS:** They're not stupid. They know that you're looking for business and to establish your relationship. You don't need to tell them that. Yeah, that's a great point. What are some of the helpful things that you've seen wedding vendors do with your venue consulting clients that have really helped those vendors stand out? Is it sending them free gifts? Because I know a lot of people have that kneejerk reaction, like, "Oh, if I spend more money, I'm more likely to see that money back," or is it something else?

**[0:36:35.6] LL:** Yeah. What we do, actually as a planning company, to be helpful is their very first wedding, we provide support. We are there physically onsite helping them to be able to focus on the venue. They are nervous as I'll get out. They want to make sure their toilets are running correctly. They want to make sure that the DJ speakers aren't going to blow the breaker box. They need to be focused on things from the venue's perspective. What we do as a planning company is just provide support physically for them just being there.

I have gotten to their first wedding. I've gotten there early and help them plant bushes, because the landscaping wasn't done in time. I'm literally talking about getting your hands dirty, like do the hard work, be a good friend, be supportive.

**[0:37:25.5] RP:** That is truly going above and beyond, right? Planting some bushes.

**[0:37:30.3] LL:** Yeah. I'm not encouraging give away all your good stuff for free and all of that, of course, but there is something that needs to be said for going the extra mile for a good partner.

**[0:37:42.6] CS:** Sure, yeah, and stepping in when they need it. They're not asking you to be their ongoing landscaper, but, "Hey, there's three bushes sitting there, and you got a shovel." This has been so good, Lindsay.

If you are looking ahead into the future five years from now, what does it look like for you in your own creative empire? Are you still running Lean On Me events? Is that maybe a different company entirely? I know it's a different company entirely right now. Maybe that's not the right question to ask, but is that still running on its own and you've taken on even more of like a visionary role? You've even maybe stepped out of the CEO role, and then the venue consulting

side of things where we focus a lot of our time today. Ideally, what would that look like? Are you looking to expand outside of Houston? Are you looking to work with other people that are considering starting venues? What is your creative empire start to look like?

**[0:38:32.5] LL:** Oh, man! I have such big dreams. For Lean On Me events, for the wedding planning side of things, I just recently hired an online business manager and it will be — So that I can start training her to hopefully be helping me to transition even more into a CEO role to where I am just overseeing the company. I have her schedule my girls and take care of the things on that frontend. It's just a well-oiled machine.

We're still supporting all of our venue partners that are here locally. We are still the same brand, still the same voice, still the same mission, but I am focusing on consulting. Five years — Well, first of all, within this next year goal my goal is to take the business outside of Texas. I want to expand nationally and be helping venues all across the nation, reaching out on helping as many people as I can. Then eventually I would love to have a firm underneath me and have girls in different territories and regions.

**[0:39:34.5] CS:** So great. How can people work with you and where can they give that free checklist?

**[0:39:38.6] LL:** Yeah. Right now on my website, which is [leanonmeconsultants.com](http://leanonmeconsultants.com), there is a downloadable link for you to click on how to prelaunch your wedding venue for a sold out first year. You'll be hitting all of your number goals within the first 12 months of being open. I would love to just start a genuine conversation with anyone listening. If you're interested in starting a venue or have an idea on it, please feel free to email me directly at [helo@leanonmeconsultants.com](mailto:helo@leanonmeconsultants.com).

**[0:40:10.0] CS:** Thank you so much, Lindsay. I hope you guys all have a chance to check out her website even if you're not considering starting a venue, it might be a great place for you to just look and see how someone has diversified their income like this. Thank you so much for being a guest on our show, Lindsay. I really, really appreciate you coming on. That's [leanonmeconsultants, with an S on the end, .com](http://leanonmeconsultants.com).

**[0:40:32.3] LL:** Yes.

**[0:40:33.9] CS:** I know. I do the same thing with mine. For those of you out there listening today, we hope that you go and build your creative empire.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:40:43.0] 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](http://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.

If you enjoyed this week's show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It's a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

[END]