

Market-driven Creativity

Worksheet # 1: Your Creative Voice

Part 1: Developing Your Creative Voice

Exercise #1: Identify your influences. Your creative voice is a combination of the people, places, things, and experiences that have influenced you. To help you clarify your creative voice, you can look for themes in those influences.

Complete the following statements:

The people I most admire are...

My favorite places are...

My favorite art is...

My favorite music is...

My favorite stories are...

I felt the happiest when...

I feel the most creative when...

Now go back through the questions and assign adjectives that best describe your answers. Are there themes that start to emerge?

Exercise #2: Identify your passions. Your creative voice also stems from what you are most passionate about. Take a few minutes to list what you are most passionate about.

From that list, identify three things that you are most passionate about.

For each of those three things, list the reasons you are passionate about them.

Exercises #3: Look at your previous work to identify themes. This is where you get to take a trip down memory lane. Go back through your previous work and try to identify common threads. Don't feel like you have to limit yourself to just one type of work. If you're a quilter who used to be a ceramist who writes a blog about gardening, look at examples of your work from all of those areas. Is there a common thread?

Exercise #4: Develop your voice through constant repetition. The best way to develop your creative voice is to produce something every day. If you write, write every day. If you paint, paint every day. If you design, design something every day.

The act of creating something every day will force you to develop a voice and style that is uniquely your own.

Complete the following sentence:

Every day I will...

Bonus: Hold yourself accountable by posting your every day task in a public forum like your blog.

For inspiration, check out [Etsy Metal's Ring a Day project](#), the [Uniform Project](#), or any of the other "365 days of" projects out there on the web.

Part 2: Communicating Your Creative Voice Through Branding

From Entrepreneur: Branding is... "Simply put, your brand is your promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from that of your competitors. Your brand is derived from who you are, who you want to be, and who people perceive you to be." (emphasis added)

Exercise #1: Identify who you are. The easiest branding starts with you - who you are and what makes you tick.

If you could describe yourself (or your business, product, or service) in three words, what would they be?

What are three things that make you (or your business, product, or service) unique?

What motivates you to get out of bed every morning?

Exercise #2: Identify who you want to be. Your brand is also about creating your idealized self (or business). It can be a an over-the-top fantasy persona (a la Lady Gaga) or it can be about holding yourself to a higher standard (such as having insanely good customer service).

What do you wish you were doing right now that you aren't? (In your business or your life.)

What are three words that you wish described you (or your business, product, or service)?

If you could be anyone in the world, who would you be?

If you could have any super power, what would it be?

Exercise #3: Get feedback about how others perceive you. Ultimately, your brand is shaped in the mind of the customer. Which means you need to monitor how you and your business are perceived by others. Call a friend, use your blog, or email your best customer and ask the following questions: (Use this page to track their answers.)

If you could describe me (or my business, product, or service) in three words, what would they be?

Name three things that make me (or my business, product, or service) unique.