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The Art of Managing
your **Career**

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CHRC Cultural
Human Resources
Council



Conseil
des ressources humaines
du secteur culturel

THE ART OF MANAGING YOUR CAREER

A Guide for the Canadian Artist
and the Self-Employed Cultural Worker

2009

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The Art of Managing Your Career
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Many representatives of Canada's cultural sector have contributed their time and effort to create *The Art of Managing Your Career – A Guide for the Canadian Artist and Self-Employed Cultural Worker*. The Cultural Human Resources Council hopes that you will find the information helpful and easy to use, but it provides the information "as is" and makes no representations or warranties of any kind regarding it. CHRC disclaims all liability of any kind whatsoever arising out of your use of, or inability to use, the information offered in this guide.

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CAREER MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY PROFILE

As a self-employed artist or a cultural worker, you must be able to ...

A. Envision and develop your career strategy	1. Set personal and professional values and priorities	2. Analyze your strengths and weaknesses	3. Consult with peers, mentors, elders, career professionals, etc.	4. Assess current and projected external environments relative to career goals projects
	5. Establish short and long term goals	6. Identify ways and means to achieve goals	7. Evaluate and modify career strategy	
B. Create a business plan and market your art / creation / work / products	1. Create a business and marketing plan	2. Establish a communication strategy	3. Export / tour your art / creation / work / product(s)	4. Import art / creation / work / product(s)
	5. Establish and maintain relationships with representatives in matters related to marketing			
C. Manage a project	1. Identify goals and objectives	2. Determine project's feasibility goals and strategy	3. Create an action plan	4. Conduct the project
	5. Control and evaluate the project			
D. Manage Resources	1. Link up to relevant professional associations	2. Identify and access government programmes	3. Access business support professionals	4. Network with artists and other persons
	5. Access physical resources through renting, buying, exchanging, etc.	6. Establish and maintain mailing lists and data bases	7. Manage information	

CAREER MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY PROFILE

As a self-employed artist or a cultural worker, you must be able to ...

E. Manage Financial Affairs	1. Develop a long term financial strategy	2. Develop and manage a budget	3. Access financial resources	4. Identify and access donations-in-kind and services
	5. Administer remuneration			
F. Manage Legal Matters	1. Manage relationships with legal advocates	2. Establish and enforce contracts and agreements	3. Provide for loss and damage	4. Protect copyright
	5. Defend against legal action	6. Fulfill statutory obligations		
G. Communicate effectively	1. Listen	2. Communicate orally	3. Write effectively	4. Negotiate agreements
	5. Resolve conflicts	6. Match communication skills to technology		
H. Demonstrate personal competencies	1. Keep the “sacred fire”	2. Make appropriate decisions	3. Manage one’s time	4. Manage one’s development
	5. Work with a team	6. Innovate and act creatively	7. Maintain self-care and well-being	

CHAPTER ONE: THE CULTURE BIZ

In the early 1980s, a small group of Montréal stilt-walkers, fire-eaters, jugglers, and other circus-act street performers had a dream to work together and create something spectacular. Lacking a circus tradition in Québec, these young performers were forced to develop their acts in isolation. This isolation made it difficult for them to prosper, to reach out to audiences, and even to learn from one another. These artists needed a new approach. A few informal meetings led to the organization of a club that developed a formal plan to unite the circus community within an environment that promoted the exchange of ideas and techniques. Over the next two years, this “club” brought to life its vision of a performance that mixed traditional circus arts with street entertainment in what was called the Baie Saint-Paul Fair. They dressed performers in wild, outrageous costumes; illuminated the stage with magical lighting; and set the acts to off-beat, original music. The founders then presented the Québec government with a plan that greatly expanded the small fair into a cohesive touring company – the ***Cirque du Soleil***.

Although *Cirque du Soleil* has since gone on to world renown and a permanent base in Las Vegas, the vision developed and articulated in its submission for funding to the Québec government in 1984 remains little changed. By marrying a vision with a sound strategy for implementation, *Cirque du Soleil* built a solid business foundation upon which the company continues to prosper.

People in the non-cultural business world routinely draw from the cultural community for creative solutions to problems. Businesspeople take courses on right-brain/left brain learning, read countless books with “The Art of” in the title, and otherwise borrow bits and pieces from the experiences of artists and cultural workers. As was the case with *Cirque du Soleil*, it is now our turn to borrow what we can from the business community to enrich our creative experience from a material perspective.

Many people in the cultural sector think that it is impossible to be both business-like and artistic. All too often, the result is that a promising cultural career ends in disappointment. “Business planning” is not incompatible with art and culture. Being practical about practical things does not have to compromise your artistic ideals or stifle creative instincts – in fact, if you organize the business side of your life you will have more freedom to do the work you love.

Success seems to always find those people who are prepared for it. In this chapter you will find a series of practical business tools that will help you to make informed choices about your expectations and priorities. Such insight will also help you to develop strong professional goals and a plan to realize them, so that you can meet success halfway.

HOW DO I ESTABLISH MY CAREER GOALS?

Tom Thirtle, an Ontario high school art teacher who was cherished by many of his students, once said, “A goal is a dream with a deadline.” He may not have been the first person to say it, but his words set a number of emerging artists and art historians (and professional art students!) on the right track.

Many people in the arts community begin their lives with a dream – a vision of their future. If they can learn to add that deadline to their aspirations and develop a realistic plan to get there, there is little that can stop them.

Writing down your goals is very important – it solidifies your commitment and acts as a written promise or an IOU that you give yourself. A study conducted at Yale University found that only 3% of the students had written goals. Twenty years later, those 3% were worth more financially than the other 97% combined. Success comes in forms other than financial, of course, but goals that are written down can be your guide toward any kind of success you seek.

So much has been written about setting and achieving goals that it might seem as though we should be referring to “the impossible dream” rather than the “dream with a deadline.” The common goal of losing weight, for example, fuels a multi-billion-dollar industry in North America. The financial success of that business lies in the failure of the participants to lose weight. There are a few universal, easy-to-understand reasons why goals are not reached:

- Goals are **too large** (not broken down into manageable units).
- Goals are **undefined** (what is it you really want?).
- Goals are **unfocused**.
- Goals are **not “integrated”** (if your most important professional goal is to become a travel writer/photographer with an outrageous Air Miles® credit, but your top personal priority is to tuck your children into their own beds every night, chances are that one of these goals will fail).
- You **procrastinate**.

- A **poorly written goal**: “I want to be a famous actor.” This goal has little chance of being realized because it is neither specific (what constitutes “famous?”) nor measurable (when and how will you know you have reached the goal?).

Here are two samples of well-defined goals:

“Within 10 years, acting will represent my main occupation and source of revenue.”

“Within three months of the completion of my third acting apprenticeship, I will apply for membership in the Canadian Actor’s Equity Association.”

What is your ultimate career goal? To fulfill your dream, what do you hope to have accomplished in the next 3 months? In the next 12 months? In 5 years? In 10 years? In 20 years?

Write a list of the accomplishments you hope to realize within these timeframes. Write them into workable goals by making them SMART: **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Trackable.**

DO I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

It has often been said that, if there were an easy-to-follow formula for success, everybody would be successful. We all know that this isn't the case. Many artists and cultural workers, regardless of ability, are unable to support themselves solely from the work they love. Others don't want to, preferring a job separate from their "calling" to ensure that their creative endeavour doesn't get "mixed up" or "compromised" by business considerations. For those who decide to become a professional, moving from working for pleasure to working for pleasure and profit, there are a few adjustments that need to be made. The first adjustment is to take the time to really see who you are.

Most people start working in the cultural sector because they have a passion to create or to be part of something that touches their souls. As they set about pursuing this goal, they, like most other people, seldom conduct an honest appraisal of their ability to succeed. They don't consider their strengths and weaknesses, their potential, their values, and what makes them who they are. Some have difficulty defining that elusive concept called "success."

"Go to your bosom: Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know."
William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

No matter where you are in your cultural development, you will always enhance your career by learning more about yourself and life in general. The following exercises will assist you to:

- List what you have accomplished both from a professional and a personal viewpoint.
- Explore what you value and what is important to you.
- Determine all of your attributes and skills plus your weaknesses.

The purpose of the following exercises is to enable you to decide whether or not you "have what it takes" to achieve your career goals. These exercises will provide insight into your own style and help you recognize where you need improvement and how to achieve it. They will generate as many questions as they answer. You should see this as an opportunity for introspection rather than a pass-or-fail test. Ultimately, only you can decide if you "have what it takes," because you are the only one who knows what success means to you.

Accomplishments

List your accomplishments, both in your career and in your personal life. What have you done that has made you especially proud? Cultural workers can often create their own opportunities.

Rank your accomplishments from the most to the least important to your professional life. Which accomplishments have contributed most to your career goals? What do you feel you need to accomplish before you can become successful? The answers to these questions will help you to begin to see yourself more objectively. Also consider how others perceive your accomplishments.

Jodi Bacchiochi, an intern with the Youth International Internship Program (offered through the Canadian Museums Association, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Youth Employment Strategy at the time) didn't wait for someone to create the opportunity for her. She created and developed the proposal that would have normally been initiated by a Canadian museum, and spent her internship in Fiji establishing the Pacific Islands Museum Association. Jodi has since been hired to work as Secretary-General of the Association she helped to build.

Values

Answer the following questions in as much detail as possible:

- What are the five most important things in your life, and why are they important?
- What are the five qualities you like most about those you admire?
- If you had no limitations of time or money, what would you do with your life personally? Professionally?
- How would you like to be remembered? (What do you want people to say about you at your funeral?)
- If you had only six months to live, how would you spend that time?

Now look closely at your answers. Do you see a pattern? Or do you notice that your answer for number four, for example, is vastly different from your answer for number three? If some of the answers are similar and you notice a pattern, you have a pretty good idea of who you are and where you want to go. If you don't, go back to these questions and consider the reasons for the discrepancies.

The answers you have given to the above questions will give you some insight into your values the set of beliefs that act as a foundation and a rationale for all of your goals and actions. If you

hope that people remember you as an **imaginative** person, then **creativity** is obviously something you value and something you should strive toward realizing and maintaining throughout your personal and professional life.

Skills and attributes

In order to find out whether you might have what it takes to achieve your career goals, you must start by looking beyond the work you do and consider your “whole person,” both your professional self and your personal self. These two elements are equally important and should reinforce each other.

George Stroumboulopoulos, as a MuchMusic VJ, found the changing focus from music journalism to fan and reality culture at Much didn't match what he was interested in doing. When CBC came calling, hoping to attract a younger audience in a prime-time slot, George's self-confidence in his journalism skills led him to switch to the public broadcaster as long as he could keep his casual style and have significant input in program content. As host of *The Hour*, George successfully integrated news, politics and popular culture into an edgy show that draws a wider and younger audience.

Using the worksheet at the end of the section, make two lists: one of your skills (what are you particularly good at doing?) and another of your personality attributes (what kind of person are you?). You can use the alphabet approach followed below for examples, or any other system that works for you. The alphabet approach has the strength of encouraging you to consider both skills and personality attributes in a broad-reaching manner that forces you out of the box of your own logical processes. Don't spend a lot of time coming up with the right word for each letter, go with your instinctual responses. You may be surprised by some of the descriptions you come up with, and equally surprised how well they apply to you.

Skills examples

Analyzing
Budgeting
Coaching
... to Z

Personality attribute examples

Ambitious
Broad-minded
Competitive
... to Z

- What have you learned about yourself? Which skills are most important to the work you want to do? Which attributes are demonstrated? Do you have these, or can you develop them?
- Now that you have considered everything that makes you who you are, you can consider what you have learned about yourself in relation to what we already know about the kind of people who succeed in self-directed careers. Nobody can possess only positive traits or excel in all things, but some characteristics are common to successful entrepreneurs, regardless of their area of activity. How many of these traits describe you? Again using the worksheet at the end of this section, rate yourself between one and five for each of these characteristics, with five being a perfect fit and one being a complete miss.

Perseverance	Flexibility
Initiative	Self-confidence
Drive	Commitment
Willingness to ask for help	Access to financial
Willingness to accept the	resources
help offered	Courage
Ability to tolerate uncertainty	Emotional resilience
Ability to work within self-	(the ability to survive
imposed standards and time	repeated rejection)
frames	

- What was your score? A high score doesn't automatically assure you riches and fame, nor does a low score necessarily condemn you to certain failure. Anyone can make a disastrous business decision or stumble upon an unexpected opportunity. However, comparing yourself generally with strong entrepreneurs gives you "another piece of the puzzle."

You can refer to this worksheet for many different purposes over and above this self-assessment. The list can hold powerful words for you. They can form the basis of strong cover letters, project proposals, funding applications, business plans, or statements of personal affirmation.

“Do I have What It Takes?” Worksheet

My ultimate career goal is:

Accomplishments

List your accomplishment (i.e., had poetry published, won a community award, finished a university degree, found a sponsor for a project). What have you done that has made you especially proud?

Rank these accomplishments from the most to the least important to you.

Accomplishments	Importance

Values

Develop an outline of what is important to you by answering the following questions:

What are the five most important things in my life? (i.e., family, critical acclaim, health, wealth)	Why?

What are the five qualities I like most about those I admire?
(i.e., strength, compassion, honesty...)

If I had no limitations of time or money, what would I do with my life?
Personally? Professionally?
(i.e., travel the world, live on an island)

How would I like to be remembered?

(i.e., as a famous artist, as a kind person, as a person with integrity)

What do I want people to say about me at my funeral?

If I had only six months to live, how would I spend my time? (i.e., stop working; complete a final, definitive work; spend more time with friends and family...)

Characteristics

Determine how well the following traits of successful entrepreneurs fit you. (5 = high; 1 = low).

Characteristics	Rate yourself				
	5	4	3	2	1
Perseverance	5	4	3	2	1
Initiative	5	4	3	2	1
Drive	5	4	3	2	1
Willingness to ask for help	5	4	3	2	1
Willingness to accept the help offered	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to tolerate uncertainty	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to work within self-imposed standards and time frames	5	4	3	2	1
Flexibility	5	4	3	2	1
Self-confidence	5	4	3	2	1
Commitment	5	4	3	2	1
Access to financial resources	5	4	3	2	1
Courage	5	4	3	2	1
Emotional resilience (the ability to survive repeated rejection)	5	4	3	2	1

Skills

List your skills (i.e., planning, conceptualizing, organizing, finding resources...). **What are you particularly good at?**

Attributes

Develop a list of you personality attributes (i.e., perseverance, commitment, etc.). **What kind of person are you?**

Weaknesses

Develop a list of your greatest weaknesses. Where do you need to improve?

Does your goal still seem to be achievable?

WHAT IS A BUSINESS PLAN?

The term “business plan” means different things to different people. Many see it as a written document used to apply for a bank loan or other kinds of financing, or as a defensive response to a Canada Revenue Agency audit notice.

A business plan can and should be more than this. Ideally, a business plan should document a planning process, set down a clear statement of business goals, and provide a roadmap that details the path you will follow to achieve these goals. ***A business plan is, then, simply an overview of who you are, what you do, what you plan to do, and how you plan to do it.***

What can a business plan do for me?

Your business plan should

- Allow you to think through all aspects of your career plan.
- Define and focus your business.
- Recognize and channel your strengths and weaknesses.
- Balance enthusiasm with reality.
- Envision the future and how to realize it by staying in touch with your goals.
- Articulate all of these elements to others.

Above all, your business plan should stand as a clear response to the question of whether (and to what degree) you balance working to create and working to eat.

If this seems like an especially tall order for a business plan, you may be confusing the act of documenting your plan with the act of planning. The production of the physical report should not be an end in itself – except for the fact that, by committing your ideas to paper, you make a commitment to your career and the realization of your goals.

A plan created as a mechanical exercise or a short-term, knee-jerk response to an audit or need for a loan will not be as effective for you as a thoughtful and realistic strategy. The adage to remember is: “A plan is nothing, planning is everything.” Try to use your creative abilities to develop a business plan that goes beyond the single objective of impressing funding agencies or the government. Use it instead to create a foundation and a framework for your personal, artistic, and business objectives.

What should the scope of my business plan be?

Increasingly we need to cast our thinking and our marketing net beyond the local arena of provincial or national boundaries to encompass the global environment in which we work artistically or culturally.

In 1981, when **René Angelil**, the respected personal manager and future husband of **Céline Dion**, decided the young singer had the talent to become a major star, he developed a promotional strategy deliberately intended to propel her onto the international stage. Two years later she became the first Canadian ever to have a gold album in France. By 1988, she was performing live as the winner of the prestigious Eurovision Song Contest in Dublin, Ireland before a televised audience of 600 million viewers. With a “global village mindset,” by 2007, Dion had sold more than 200 million albums worldwide.

Even though most artists and cultural workers are unlikely to set their sights so firmly on succeeding in the international market as was true of Dion and Angelil, it is important that you begin your thinking with the widest view possible and work backward from there. Remember the popular maxim: “Think globally, act locally” and apply it to your business plan. Be sure to factor in any global considerations that might either adversely or positively affect your plans.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A GOOD BUSINESS PLAN AND HOW DO I WRITE ONE?

Depending on your purpose in preparing a formal business plan, the intended leadership, and the nature and scope of your work that you wish to encompass in its pages, your plan will include and emphasize different elements. There is no established size, level of detail, or complexity required.

One Ottawa-area sculptor's business plan, which successfully withstood a Canada Customs and Revenue Agency audit, consisted basically of a description of her "artistic endeavour" and what entrepreneurial and artistic goals she had set for the future. Imitating corporate presentation and weighing in at an imposing 172 pages in length, another plan successfully secured government funding for a project launched by a group of independent editors and publishers.

As with these examples, your plan should only include the sections and information necessary to communicate your ideas and fulfill your purpose. Let your creativity complement the formal aspects of the plan that the reader will expect to see.

The twelve elements of a business plan:

1. Cover letter
2. Cover sheet
3. Table of contents
4. Executive summary
5. Identity statement
6. Mission/vision statement
7. Values statement
8. Business strategy
9. Market strategy
10. Financial strategy
11. Summation
12. Appendices: supporting documents

1. Cover letter

If, for example, you are submitting your business plan to Canada Revenue Agency or a lending institution, a personalized cover letter is essential. The letter should consist of a single page that introduces the plan and contains specific information that you wish to highlight.

2. Cover sheet

A cover sheet should come next. It will include:

- Submission and completion date of the business plan.
- Name of business.
- Location / address.
- Other contact information - telephone numbers, e-mail address, web address (URL).
- Contact person(s), including titles.

3. Table of contents

To help the reader navigate through the document, a simple table of contents should be included.

4. Executive summary

The Executive Summary is a preface to the entire document. It should introduce your business and the rest of the plan. This summary is often the only part of the plan that a potential sponsor or loan officer will read before flipping to the financial statements. Therefore, it should offer a concise but engaging overview of the nature of your artistic or cultural business, including its history, its present, and your projected vision of its future. Usually your Executive Summary will be strengthened if you include a summarized version of your Identity, Mission, and Value statements to reinforce in the reader's mind that you have a clear concept of these vital aspects of any business operation. Because the Executive Summary plays such an important role, writing it last will enable you to more easily crystallize the entire plan.

5. The identity statement

Often included as an important component of the Executive Summary, but equally often allowed to stand on its own as a section following the Executive Summary, is the "Identity Statement" or "Business Definition." ***This is usually a single sentence that effectively captures the essence of the business.*** Usually written in the present tense, it is almost identical to a one-sentence description of a novel's plot. Consider this:

A mysterious woman, who has had an affair with the lovers of three other women, returns from the dead to again threaten their happiness. - **Margaret Atwood's** *The Robber Bride*.

While not quite so dramatic, here are a couple of examples of Business Plan Identity Statements:

Griffin Dagny is a modern interpretive dancer and choreographer of children's ballet and jazz recitals offered through the B.C. Ministry of Education.

Bonne Note provides consulting services and music retraining for professional, mid-career, classically-trained musicians in the Montréal area.

To decide what elements should go into your Identity Statement, ask yourself these questions:

- **Who am I?** (your name or the name of your business);
- **What do I do?** (the nature of the product or service you provide);
- **How do I do it?** (what you do in terms of quality, context, etc.);
- **For whom do I do it?** (your customers/clients/audience).

See Chapter Two for more information on defining your services and products.

6. The mission statement / vision statement

Your Identity Statement can be complemented by, or expanded into, a full Mission or Vision Statement that defines the business in terms of the future, while also communicating its general goals and objectives.

The **Cultural Human Resources Council** (CHRC) is a national arts service organization whose mandate is to strengthen the Canadian cultural workforce by providing leadership and innovative solutions to human resource issues and to better the HR environment within the cultural sector. CHRC was created in 1995 with the support of Human Resources Development Canada and by members of the cultural community. Its members come from all artistic disciplines in the cultural sector.

7. Values statement

Although often omitted from traditional private-sector business plans, a Values statement should play an important role in any cultural-sector business plan. Such a statement allows you to explain the artistic and social values that motivate your work. Corporations, banks, and Canada Revenue Agency and Revenu Québec all have a history of trying, usually unsuccessfully, to understand professions which do not always have “profit” as their primary motive, but which have a profound impact on the type of society we are. We have a different currency.

- Take the opportunity to explain your intentions and beliefs, and what drew you to your choice of livelihood. Refer back to the values exercise you completed on pages 13-16 to assist you in writing this section.
- Remember that goals and actions should be shaped by your values and what is important to you. A Values Statement is much more than just a “touchy-feely” expression – it is an indication of your “driving force” that, in a very practical sense, will keep you on the right track.

If the Value Statement for a contract designer digitizing a museum’s archival collection stated his commitment to “maintaining the most up-to-date technology skills and equipment,” he could easily justify setting a professional and business goal of upgrading of equipment and technical knowledge rather than purely focusing on expanding market share.

- Try setting out your Value Statement as a list of between two and five values, ranked in order from the most essential value influencing the success of your plan to the least essential. Your statement or list of values does not have to be formal – an indication of your beliefs, as a foundation for your goals and the business plan itself, is what is important.

The following is an example of a **Value Statement** from an effective business plan.

Respect for the Sector

The most important value is a desire to be of benefit to the Canadian arts community in its entirety, while working for specific organizations within it.

Customer Service / Customer-Oriented Nature

The second-place value situates the company as one that not only focuses upon the customer, but which defines its success by the degree to which its clients are satisfied.

Responsiveness

The third-place value is linked closely with the previous two values and indicates a high regard for consistent quality and reliable service, coupled with respect for the customer's needs.

Integrity

The fourth-place value indicates the company's desire to be known for its honest professionalism and ability to adhere to straightforward ethics and principles.

Progressiveness

The fifth-place value signifies an aspiration to be continually forward-thinking and to utilize the newest innovations and technologies to provide the most effective service.

8. Business analysis

In this section, you deliver the “big picture perspective” balanced by an understanding of details drawn from your self-assessment.

The business analysis is performed for the same reasons as your self-assessment - to determine both the positive and the negative aspects of your business in order to build on the strong points and minimize the weak. This part of the business plan is often referred to as a SWOT Analysis: a determination of your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. If you prefer more positive vocabulary, substitute “liabilities” for “weaknesses” and “challenges” for “threats” in your actual document.

Strengths and weaknesses

- It is a good idea to offer a strong mix of skills and personality attributes in the strengths column (for example: excellent team-building and facilitation skills, commitment, bilingualism, determination, and cultural and ethnocultural sensitivity).

- Look back to the exercises that you completed on pages 13-16 to remind yourself of relevant strengths.
- Under “weaknesses,” focus primarily on skills that would help you but which you haven’t yet acquired (insufficient French language skills, lack of selling or “closing” skills). This approach will communicate to everyone, yourself included, that your few weaknesses do not constitute inherent character flaws. Rather, they are something you can either learn or work on in order to improve your chances for success.

Opportunities and challenges: Analyzing the market

Founder and publisher of *Up Here*, **Marion LaVigne** admits that she knew nothing about publishing in the early days of the magazine. However, she believed that people would be interested in the unique stories of the north, and undertook market research to ensure she was in touch with her readership. The combination of quirky stories and unusual photographs has resulted in a circulation of 22,000 from across Canada and around the world. Despite how hard-hit the Canadian magazine industry had been, in 2009, *Up Here* celebrated its 25th anniversary and its 13th year of making a profit.

In the world of modern commerce, the objective of market analysis is to understand your **sector**, your **customer**, your **competition**, and the way your specific **business** relates to them. While a term such as “customer” applies awkwardly in many cases to the cultural sector, it reminds us that we produce our work with the idea that somebody will, by one means or another, agree to impart a value to it. Usually that valuation is expressed through the exchange of money.

The sector

Whether marketing globally or locally, understanding the environment you work in is the first step in your market analysis. If you haven’t had the opportunity to learn about your sector “from the inside” through salaried positions in your particular area of interest, you should conduct some general background research.

- Scan the internet, in particular discipline-specific professional associations and arts service organizations, CHRC’s Careers in Culture and the discipline enhancements for *The Art of Managing Your Career* (all available at: www.culturalhrc.ca).
- Read advertisements in appropriate magazines.

- Join associations, go to meetings, attend performances or readings or exhibition openings or screenings, and talk to people with similar interests.

If you are considering an **international venture**, there are explicit issues to consider. The needs of these customers, and particularly the avenues and means for reaching them, can greatly differ from those you would use for more local or even national markets. As the issues are very specific to the particular country and industry involved, take special effort during this “market research” stage.

General information about exporting your work and working within international markets can be accessed through Industry Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada and Québec Delegation, the trade commissioner service, professional and trade associations, overseas offices of certain provinces, your chartered bank’s international division, and foreign country consulates within Canada. Specific information can also be garnered by contacting the desired customer directly.

The customer

Before you can begin to try your hand at marketing, you must be able to identify and understand the target of that marketing – your customer. Your career can benefit from a more formal examination of who your customers are in three main ways:

- It will enable you to cater your marketing efforts and materials to the tastes of the market.
- Knowing your customers’ needs and tastes will help you to decide upon the best materials and messages to use to reach them.
- Understanding your current customers will help you to attract new ones.

So, how do you learn what you need to know about your customers? Ask questions that enable you to develop a profile of who your customers are, where they are located, and how you can successfully make your work available to them.

A **writer** can’t possibly talk to every potential book buyer, but he can contact bookstore owners who talk to their customers every day and consequently know their customers interests. By this means, the writer can gather demographic information from bookstores, which will show that books on subjects similar to his have enjoyed strong sales in certain areas or among specific age groups. He can also surf the web to research the market: what’s

being published, what's getting good reviews, who's blogging, and which publishers are interested in the genres in which he writes.

Similarly, a **musician** planning a cross-country tour would be wise to determine which types of music are popular in which cities. She might, as a result, decide that the customer base for her string quartet is too small in areas in which there is no radio play of classical music unless it has an active chamber orchestra that packs them in at the local high-school auditorium. The Internet is an ideal source of information about the most appropriate places to tour, and media contacts for promoting her music.

An **actor** might contact the community theatres in which he wishes to perform to find out about their audition schedule, their requirements, and the type of plays they are producing in the coming year. Websites of theatre companies and professional associations in the performing arts are essential resources. The local indie media or a theatre buff's blog may be a great source of inside information

You can also turn the "market research" process around and offer simple ways for your customer to reach you.

Whether you are **Great Big Sea, Jully Black, Daniel Bélanger** or the next big thing, it is very important to develop a website that provides information about you, shows your discography, let's people know where you are touring, includes other key content such as YouTube videos of your music and links to your pages in MySpace and Facebook, and provides access to direct sales of your music. Check out the websites of your favourite musicians to see what kind of features you would like on your website. If you can't afford a website, be sure to develop a Facebook page, post a few videos on YouTube, and consider other social networking medium such as MySpace and Twitter to let people know about you and add you to their electronic contacts/friends.

The competition

Competition is fierce in the cultural sector. Dancers compete for a choice role, musicians vie for the few opportunities to sign to a label, filmmakers contend for limited resources and studio time, and artists and arts administrators of all kinds strive to outdo each other in their quest for dwindling public resources.

Furthermore, not all competition is so straightforward and obvious. Your competition can even include television, sporting events, shopping trips, video rentals, blogs – anything that your audience could be doing with its leisure time or its disposable income, rather than attending your concert or buying your pottery at the neighbourhood cooperative market.

Ask yourself:

Who are my competitors?

What do they sell, and how, where, and to whom do they sell it?

What makes them different from me?

Perhaps the other **independent curators** vying for business from your target customers focus only upon galleries and neglect the museums and other heritage institutions that you can service. Or maybe the other **actors in your area** have impressive classical training but no real experience in contemporary theatre. Or the other **visual artists** seeking acceptance in local shows are not exploring multi-media/new media in their pieces.

Learn from their shortcomings. Try also to determine the reasons for your competitors' successes.

Pricing your work

A woman in Paris approached **Picasso** and asked him to sketch her portrait. He obliged, handed her the small drawing, and requested 5,000 francs for payment. The woman blanched, and said, "But it only took you three minutes!" Picasso responded, "No. It took me all my life."

Deciding what to charge for your work is probably the most difficult part of the planning process and continues to be difficult even for seasoned cultural professionals. There are a number of factors that you can consider when determining a price, such as:

- Production costs (material expenses such as paint, canvases, canvas stretchers and framing materials, etc., and the time and labour involved in the creation of the work).
- Agent or dealer commissions.
- Website, social networking and Internet marketing costs.
- Profit margin.
- Quality.
- Artistic/professional reputation.

- Market demand.
- What your colleagues charge.
- “What the market will bear”.

There is no simple solution to the price-setting dilemma. However, there are a few ways that you can judge whether the price you have determined is appropriate:

- Investigate whether there are pricing standards within your industry. Many professional associations have developed guidelines for minimum fees that their membership should or must charge. Check out the discipline-specific resources from *The Art of Managing Your Career* for a list of professional associations’ websites (go to www.culturalhrc.ca, click on *The Art of Managing Your Career*, select a discipline, and refer to Links).
- Compare your prices with colleagues who are at a similar career stage and produce comparable work for corresponding markets.
- Check your contracts carefully to ensure that you are getting paid for what you think you are getting paid for.

If a **writer or illustrator** signs a contract that assigns the publisher “all rights,” he should be receiving much higher payment than usual because the publisher will be able to reprint or relicense his work, for profit, anytime, anywhere, in any format, and within any context it desires.

(See “How do I protect my copyright?”)

9. Market strategy

As a result of your business analysis, you have become more knowledgeable about your professional environment, your customers, what interests them, and how they prefer to be reached. You are aware of whom your competition is and how to contend with and/or work with them. You also understand what is really important about the work you do and how to make it market-ready. Now you need to decide how to put these pieces together into a strategy that will bring your work and market together.

Up-and-coming musician **Joshua Bartholomew** wanted to get the word out about his music. He found a well-established agency to represent him as a junior talent, but decided that he had to make other efforts to market himself and his music. He created his own website that

invites fans to hear his music, enjoy tour videos, check out a gorgeous flipbook for his first album, get even more information on his MySpace, Facebook and other sites or follow him on Twitter and, of course, buy his music. The welcoming website is an effective marketing tool for this multi-talented newcomer to the North American music scene.

A market strategy will describe the way in which you intend to achieve your overall marketing goals: what you will do, when you will do it, where you will do it, and with which tools.

10. Financial strategy

Your plan's Financial Strategy section will vary somewhat depending upon the plan's projected readership, its purpose and "stimulus," and the nature of your work.

If your plan is being written primarily to satisfy a Canada Revenue Agency audit or to request funds from a lending institution, you will need to focus upon **profitability** and demonstrate exactly how your income will exceed your expenses within a set amount of time.

If you have received (or are requesting) government or arm's-length arts agency grants, the most important aspect becomes **accountability** – whether you have spent (or predict you will spend) public money in a reasonable, responsible manner, and certainly not in a way that conflicts with the granting agency's values.

However, if your business plan is an internal management tool, **sustainability** (having enough money to continue working the way you want to work) may be your focus. What you decide to include and emphasize in this section will depend upon the picture you wish or need to paint.

Basically, your "financial plan" is a comparison between income (the revenues your business brings in) and expenses (what you need to spend to generate those revenues). This comparison should be presented in at least two ways: what your financial track record has been to date, and what your projections are for the future (usually two to five years). The following two types of statements are usually found within a business plan:

- Balance Sheet – Current Assets and Liabilities.
- Cash Flow – Profit and Loss Projections.

If you are submitting this plan as part of a funding request to a lending institution, your projected profits will have to be high enough to comfortably repay the loan. Your plan will be assessed by the quality of the assumptions on which these projections are based. Make sure that your projections and claims are consistent throughout the document.

These financial statements should be complemented by an outline and justification of the purpose for any requested funding (capital expenses such as a computer, recording/editing equipment, or a kiln; increased promotion of existing work; expansion of the business; rights acquisition; etc.). Together, these elements comprise your **Financial Strategy**.

An example of a financial strategy

L'ECLAT DE VERRE

Business Plan/Financial Data

Sophie Latour has been working as a glassmaker for a number of years. She makes all kinds of objects, from vases to cups and masks. She has built an enviable reputation in her field and has decided to start her own business, called L'éclat de verre, in the heart of the Eastern Townships. She found a commercial space in the heart of the tourist zone. She has already developed various sections of her business plan and must now quantify her financial objectives in order to obtain financing from a lending institution.

CONTEXT

Sophie draws up this list of her start-up needs:

Ovens and tools	\$6,250	
Start-up inventory	\$5,000	
Office furniture	\$875	
Communications/Internet	\$250	/ month
Rent	\$1,250	/ month (including gas for the oven and insurance)
Subcontracting	\$1,000	/ month
	\$14,625	

Capital investment (S. Latour)

In cash	\$3,125
In furniture	<u>\$ 875</u>
	\$4,000

Sophie has to invest in purchasing her equipment since until quite recently she rented equipment from the École de Verre de Sherbrooke. She estimates her needs in start-up inventory to be \$5,000, and as the need arises she will hire a friend to help with the finishing of her creations and in-store sales. Since Ms. Latour will invest \$875 of her personal furniture and \$3,125, she will ask for \$10,625 in financing (\$14,625- \$4,000). Here is the table to present for asking for the necessary loan:

REQUIRED START-UP FUNDS

Short-term assets

Cash (working capital)	\$2,500
------------------------	---------

Capital assets

Equipment	\$6,250
-----------	---------

Office Furniture	\$875
Start-up inventory	
Inventory	\$5,000
Total funds required at start up	\$14,625
Ms. Latour's investment	\$4,000
Required financing	\$10,625
Long-term-loan	\$10,625

OPENING BALANCE SHEET

The balance sheet is a photograph of the resources possessed by a company at a given moment: the ASSETS and the means used to finance these assets: the liabilities and the owner's equity.

- The opening balance sheet is drawn up on the company's first day of operation.
- Short-term assets are the resources the company will use during the coming year of operation.
- Capital assets are material resources needed for operation and which have a lifetime of more than one year.
- Liabilities are debts that the company has committed to repaying during the following year (short-term liabilities) or in more than one year (long-term liabilities).
- The owner's capital represents the sums of money or the goods invested by the owner in his/her company. This capital will be increased by the profits generated by the company's operation or by additional funds injected by the owner. This capital will decrease if the company has losses or if the owner takes money from his/her company.
- Total assets \$14,625 are equal to total liabilities (\$10,625) plus total capital (\$4,000), which yields the following equation: ASSETS = LIABILITIES + CAPITAL

Opening balance sheet, January 2008

Assets

Short-term assets

Cash	\$2,500
Inventory	\$5,000
Total short-term assets	\$7,500

Capital assets

Equipment	\$6,250
Office Furniture	\$875
Total capital assets	\$7,125

Total assets **\$14,625**

Liabilities

Long-term liability

Long-term loan	\$10,625
Total liabilities	\$10,625

PLUS

Owner's capital (S. Latour) **\$4,000**

Total liabilities and capital **\$14,625**

HYPOTHESES LINKED TO FORECASTS

Hypotheses must consider the various elements in the financial strategy. It is important to present simple and realistic hypotheses. Since they are hypotheses, it is obvious that they will not be perfectly accomplished. Lenders analyze the plausibility of the hypotheses rather than their degree of precision.

Budgeted balance sheet

Inventory sold during the month is replaced and thus purchased during the same month.
Inventory at the beginning is safety inventory.

Depreciation	Linear rate
Oven and equipment	10%
Office Furniture	20%

Budgeted income statement

Sales

According to a market study, sales are seasonal.
To estimate sales, we take:

Annual sales		\$52,500
January	3%	
February	5%	Ski tourists
March	7%	School break
April	12%	Easter decorations sales
May	10%	Mother's Day
June	5%	
July	15%	Vacationing tourists
August	13%	Vacationing tourists
September	6%	Festival of colours
October	7%	Festival of colours
November	5%	Christmas presents beginning
December	12%	Christmas presents sales
Total	100%	

Cost of goods sold

The cost of goods sold (COGS) is a percentage of monthly sales (due to a hypothesis regarding inventory). The percentage is a hypothesis depending on the expected average unit profit margin.
%COGS/Selling price **40%**

HYPOTHESES LINKED TO BALANCE SHEET:

- **INVENTORY:** The simplest hypothesis to illustrate is when the inventory sold during a given month is replaced during the same month (see explanation of the cost of goods sold to do the calculation).
- **DEPRECIATION:** Whenever a company uses goods with a life expectancy of more than one year, it is necessary at the year end to calculate the portion of this asset (capital asset) which enabled the generation of revenues. The depreciation rate is set, which distributes the cost of the item over its useful life. For example, in the case of the equipment needed to make glass stones, we suppose a rate of 10%, which means that each fiscal year will support a depreciation charge of \$625 (cost \$6,250 x 10%).
- **DISTRIBUTION OF SALES:** It is important to estimate monthly sales and to justify one's choices. L'éclat de verre assumes that sales will be higher during the months when the number of tourists is the greatest. In its estimates, L'éclat de verre assumes cash sales only.

- **COST OF GOODS SOLD (COGS):** The percentage of COGS enables the identification of the desired gross profit on sales. Ms. Latour would like a gross profit (or margin) of 60% for L'éclat de verre. This means that a glass piece, the cost of which is set at \$40 must be sold at \$100 to obtain a gross profit of \$60.
- The formula is simple: SALES (100 %) – COGS (40 %) = Gross profit (60 %)
- Determining the gross profit makes it easy to calculate forecasted inventory purchases, if we assume that inventory sold is replaced in the same month. For example, for L'éclat de verre, sales for February are estimated at 5% of the \$52,500 total forecasted for the year ($5\% \times \$52,200 = \$2,625$). To determine the amount of purchases to be made, multiply February's sales by 40 % ($40\% \times \$2,625 = \$1,050$, which represents purchases for February).

**Cash flow budget
For the fiscal year ending
December 31, 2008**

Month	Start up	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Cash inflow														
Cash sales		\$1,575	\$2,625	\$3,675	\$6,300	\$5,250	\$2,625	\$7,875	\$6,825	\$3,150	\$3,675	\$2,625	\$6,300	\$52,500
Long-term loan	\$10,625	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Capital investment in \$	\$3,125	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total cash inflow	\$13,750	\$1,575	\$2,625	\$3,675	\$6,300	\$5,250	\$2,625	\$2,625	\$2,625	\$2,625	\$3,675	\$2,625	\$6,300	\$52,500
Cash outflow														
Purchases (inventory)	\$5,000	\$630	\$1,050	\$1,470	\$2,520	\$2,100	\$1,050	\$3,150	\$2,730	\$1,260	\$1,470	\$1,050	\$2,520	\$21,000
Rent	\$0	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$15,000
Subcontracting	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$12,000
Office Furniture	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Purchases (furniture)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Purchases (oven and equipment)	\$6,250	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Loan repayment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Interest on loan	\$0	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$106	\$1,275
Publicity / Telephone	\$0	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$3,000
Total cash outflow	-\$11,250	-\$3,236	-\$3,656	-\$4,076	-\$5,126	-\$4,706	-\$3,656	-\$5,756	-\$5,336	-\$3,866	-\$4,076	-\$3,656	-\$5,126	-\$52,275
Cash at the beginning of the month	\$0	\$2,500	\$839	-\$193	-\$594	\$580	\$1,124	\$93	\$2,211	\$3,700	\$2,984	\$2,583	\$1,551	\$2,500
Monthly surplus (deficit)	\$2,500	-\$1,661	-\$1,031	-\$401	\$1,174	\$544	-\$1,031	\$2,119	\$1,489	-\$716	-\$401	-\$1,031	\$1,174	\$225
Cash at the end of the month	\$2,500	\$839	-\$193	-\$594	\$580	\$1,124	\$93	\$2,211	\$3,700	\$2,984	\$2,583	\$1,551	\$2,725	\$2,725

The cash flow budget is a very important tool in an application for financing. For each month, it represents the inflow of money (or funds) from which are subtracted the outflow of money (or funds). This tool lets you know, as a function of the forecasted hypotheses, the months during which it will be necessary to use a credit margin. For example, for L'éclat de verre, February and March will require additional financing or higher than forecasted sales in the hypotheses. Some lending institutions can require a three-year cash flow budget. It is thus necessary to think about plausible hypotheses for a longer period of time.

**BUDGETED INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING
December 31, 2009**

	<u>2008</u>
Earnings	
Sales	\$52,500
Cost of goods sold	
Start up inventory	\$5 000
Plus: Purchases	\$21,000
Minus: End inventory	\$5,000
Cost of goods sold	\$21,000
Gross profit	\$31,500
Sales and administration costs	
Rent	\$15,000
Subcontracting	\$12,000
Depreciation-Equipment	\$625
Depreciation-Office Furniture	\$175
Publicity/telephone	\$3,000
Total sales and administration costs	\$30,800
Earnings before interest	\$700
Interest on loan	\$1,275
Net profit	(\$575)

The income statement presents earnings for a fiscal year from which are subtracted all operating costs: cost of goods sold, sales and administration costs, which include depreciation. It should be noted that several of the data in this income statement come from the TOTAL column of the preceding cash flow budget. Some lending institutions ask for budgeted income statements for three years.

BUDGETED BALANCE SHEET FOR DECEMBER 31				
YEAR	2008		2009	2010
Assets				
Short-term assets				
Cash		\$2,180		
Inventory		\$4,000		
Total short-term assets		\$6,180		
Capital assets				
Equipment	\$5,000			
Minus:				
Accumulated depreciation	\$500	\$4,500		
Office Furniture	\$700			
Minus:				
Accumulated depreciation	\$140	\$560		
Total long-term assets		\$5,060		
Total assets		\$11,240		
Liabilities				
<i>Long-term liabilities</i>				
Long-term loan		\$8,500		
Total liabilities		\$8,500		
Owner's capital				
Sophie Latour	\$3,200			
Profit (loss)	(\$460)			
Capital at the end	\$2,740	\$ 2,740		
Total liabilities and capital		\$11,240		

The budgeted balance sheet gives a new photograph of the business 12 months after the opening balance sheet. It reflects the assets on one side and the liabilities and the owner's capital on the other. For L'éclat de verre's first fiscal year, notice that the owner's capital is diminished by the net loss calculated in the earnings statement, that is by (- \$575). Notice also that the total assets are equal to the total liabilities and the capital (assets = liabilities + capital). Some lending institutions ask for three-year budgeted balance sheets.

11. Summation

A concise restatement of your “business case” (your strategy and highlights of the supporting material) is all that is necessary for this section.

12. Appendices: Supporting documents

The “appendices” section should contain any documents you believe will add credibility to the plan and substantiate claims you have made. You may wish to include:

- A résumé or biography.
- A performing, exhibition, publication, or recording history.
- A list of references (obtain permission from the persons to use their name for reference).
- A list of awards.
- Public funding (grants awarded) and private support.
- Press reviews.
- A list of clients (obtain permission from the clients to use their name for reference);
- “Product literature” (a brochure, a portfolio sample).
- Key copyright information (if your work is protected by a copyright collective such as CANCOPY).
- A list of applicable memberships and affiliations.
- A survey of resources (equipment, supplies, even strategic partners).

The most difficult, but important, supporting document is your résumé or biography. While the content of a biography will vary considerably, here’s a good format to follow:

Example biography

Mark A. Melymick, currently the Coordinator of the Performing Arts Preparation Program at Sheridan College in Oakville Ontario, has extensive experience as a professional actor, writer and teacher. He is a published playwright and has optioned a screenplay, *The Wise High Guys*. He has received a Saskatchewan Arts Board grant, a Canada Council “B” grant and, most recently, Telefilm funding for his writing.

He has numerous television and movie acting credits, including recurring roles on *Due South* and *Flash Forward* and guest lead on the *Cagney and Lacey* TV movie (his performance

received a glowing review in the Hollywood industry magazine, *Variety*. He has also performed in dozens of television commercials.

His professional stage debut was at Twenty-fifth Street Theatre. He is also one of the founders of the long running improv show, “The Saskatoon Soaps,” and performed in the first season of “Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan.”

In New York, Mark played “The Magistrate” in the Off-Broadway production of *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and was the director-founder of the The Village Soaps improv troupe. He received his MFA in New York under the guidance and direction of Academy award winning actor, F. Murray Abraham and Obie award winning playwright and director, Jack Gelber.

In Toronto, he studied with Al Waxman, with whom he also worked as an actor on *Scales of Justice* and *Twice in a Lifetime*.

Mark won a comedy contest while attending the U of S and later performed stand-up comedy at Yuk Yuk’s (Toronto), The Comedy Store (London, UK), The Gilded Balloon (Edinburgh), The Improv (New York), Paradise Island (Bahamas), and the original Comedy Shoe (Saskatoon). In Saskatoon, he also wrote and produced the popular comedy revue *Madness*.

Mark was a high school teacher for 17 years, mostly at White Oaks Secondary School where he was Head of Performing Arts. While there, he directed numerous plays and nurtured the talents of hundreds of students, including present day Canadian stars Gerri Hall and Brandon McGibbon.

In 1999, he was elected Vice President, External Affairs for ACTRA, where he served on council for two terms, until stepping down when he was asked to head up the new program at Sheridan College. In 2005, he was elected to serve his third term as Co-Chair of Audio Visual & Live Performing Arts on the Board of Directors for the Cultural Human Resources Council, where he has chaired several working committees developing Arts curriculum.

He is proud Canadian and a strong promoter of Canadian Culture ... but is most proud of co-producing his two sons Luke and Lee.

Packaging your business plan

Your business plan should be simple, logical, and relevant to your work and the intended audience. While it is difficult to go wrong with a neat presentation on high-quality white paper and bound tastefully, you may wish to add some subtle touches that reflect your artistic personality or use new technologies to creatively represent your work. Photographs or examples of artwork on digital media, as appropriate, can be added to the plan, especially if the work is difficult to explain.

HOW DO I SHAPE MY CAREER GOALS AND BUSINESS PLAN INTO A “CAREER STRATEGY”?

The process of developing a list of goals and creating a business plan gives you the opportunity to take a realistic, objective look at yourself and your work. The resulting documents hold everything you need for success except the “kinetic force” (the movement or the action). You have to provide that part. Just like a hammer that has been abandoned in the grass, a business plan and a set of goals will not get you any closer to building your dreams if you don’t use them.

Implementation steps

The specific steps you should take to implement your plan will depend on the plan itself. These are, however, some general steps to consider:

- Just start. Don’t wait until you have more time – work has a tendency to stretch to fit the time allowed for it. If you don’t make time for it, it won’t happen.
- Revisit the plan and review your goals often.
- Make sure that your goals and the actions you are taking to realize them are consistent with your values and what it is you really want to achieve.
- Evaluate the success of your actions. You need to be able to gauge whether your efforts are bringing you closer to realizing your goals.

If you had hoped to increase your visibility in the community, for example, you should monitor such quantitative measures as the number of visitors to your performance or exhibition, the number of inquiries about your work, and the increase in the number of clients. A large number of visitors to your website definitely can be persuasive! Measuring the quality of your career and life should not be forgotten in this process. For example, if you believe success is reflected by how many people buy your work, an exhibition which draws a large audience and critical acclaim but results in few sales will probably seem a failure.

Leslie Feist’s song, *1234*, was featured in a commercial for iPod nano. It propelled her indie release to the top of U.S. and U.K. charts, with over 73,000 downloads per week, in 2007.

- Revise your goals, your plan, or your actions as you go. As your career evolves, your plan should grow with you. Many people will shelve their business plan, pull it out two years later, and, discovering that their predictions in the plan don’t match the reality of the day, conclude

that the entire effort was a waste of time. These people have missed a considerable opportunity. Whenever circumstances change for you, go back to your plan and modify it as required to keep it current.

- Validate your plan. Consider drawing on the experience of a veteran colleague you know to be experienced and well versed in the same area you are entering. You can bring such a person into the process even while determining your career goals and developing your business plan or after the fact as a final check on the validity of your overall strategy.

You may, for example, decide to work formally or informally with a mentor. Through a mentor, you can often get “real world” training, advice, support, and encouragement often lacking in a self-employed cultural worker’s professional life. Mentoring can also provide measurable and tangible benefits.

- Renew your plan. Revisions to your business plan should be a continuous, lifelong, and beneficial process. There will, however, be a time when revision isn’t enough. If your career has significantly changed direction or focus, a simple revision to your plan won’t work. If you started out in the area of film production but decided later to become a screenwriter instead, you will need a different plan. In such cases, use your original plan as a building block, but acknowledge that you need to take a fresh look at your career and devise a new plan. You might find out something new about yourself in the process.

Consider the case of writer **Ann Douglas**. A periodical writer who decided to become an apprentice through the Periodical Writers Association of Canada’s Mentoring Program, Douglas worked closely with a respected senior writer to acquire the skills to develop and market her first book. *Baby Science: How Babies Really Work* eventually spent 17 weeks on the *Globe and Mail’s* bestsellers list and has since been followed by a number of other top sellers which have been profiled in *The Walrus*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Reader’s Digest*, *Homemakers*, and *Today’s Parent*.

When you follow these steps to develop and implement your business plan, you unite your purpose (defined during your self-assessment), your tools (your goals and business plan), and the appropriate actions (what you are going to do to realize your plan). As a result, you will have a clearer vision of the future of your cultural or artistic business. As you move toward turning that vision into reality, you can’t help but head in the direction of success – whatever success means for you.