



CRAFT, by OCADU

User Research Report



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Framing /

Introduction

In response to negative impacts of COVID-19 on people with creative occupations, OCAD University is launching CRAFT.

The vision for CRAFT:

CRAFT is an online marketplace where creatives can sell their work while developing skills to thrive in a just economy. CRAFT is a platform cooperative: an equitable and democratic business model that empowers, instead of exploits, creatives. By earning income and accessing CRAFT training and upskilling, artists and designers build the economic and professional resilience and collective strength needed to flourish, even in the face of shocks and uncertainty.

There are three main pillars to the CRAFT model:

- **Platform:** An online marketplace for creatives to sell their work.
- **Community:** A platform co-op governance model that enables co-ownership, co-governance and the peer-to-peer support.
- **Learning:** A real-world skills training that provides members an environment to learn how to launch and grow their creative businesses.

This research aims to uncover an **initial hypothesis of the needs of creative entrepreneurs** around these three pillars. The hypotheses uncovered in this research is anticipated to be **further validated and iterated upon** by a group of **founding members** who will be recruited later this year.

Data Collection /

Project Objectives

We started this project with **the primary research questions:**

- How might we define the target user for CRAFT?
- How might we define the value proposition of the three pillars of CRAFT (learning, community and platform) to provide value for this target user?

In addition to the following **secondary research questions:**

- What type of creative is this target user (Artist or designer? Product maker or service provider)?
- How might CRAFT's positioning fit into the existing landscape of resources and platforms available to our target user?

With the objective to uncover:

- Recommendations on the profile(s) of a target user, their needs, their creative entrepreneurship journey and potential leverage points where CRAFT may add value
- The existing landscape of available platforms for our target user in relation to the CRAFT vision
- A hypothesis of the value proposition for CRAFT
- Recommendations for moving forward

To collect the data we needed for this research, we planned:

- A series of stakeholder interviews to understand key perspectives in the CRAFT and OCADU ecosystem
- A survey targeting a wide range of OCADU-affiliated creatives
- Interviews with creative entrepreneurs

Stakeholder Interviews

There are number of stakeholders in the CRAFT and OCADU ecosystem whose perspectives were important to consider through our research process. In consultation with OCADU Co, we identified representatives from various offices and departments at OCADU with following goals:

- To understand their experience with creative entrepreneurs both within and outside of their work at OCADU
- To determine their hypotheses in response to our research questions
- To unpack the unique value that OCADU has to bring to CRAFT
- To better understand the competitive landscape in which CRAFT fits
- To help us start to map and understand the journey for creative entrepreneurs and their needs

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Stakeholders interviewed for this research:

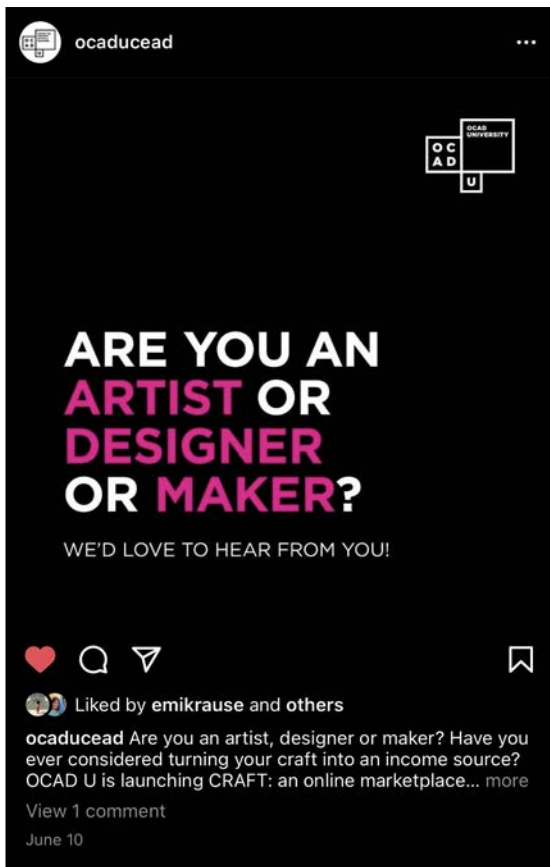
- Evan Tapper, Director, Continuing Studies
- Alexandra Hong, Project Officer, CEAD
- Zev Farber, Director, CEAD
- Deanne Fisher, Vice-Provost, Students & International
- Dori Tunstall, Dean, Faculty of Design, OCADU

Survey

We launched a survey to broadly understand the experience of OCADU affiliated students and alumni with creative entrepreneurship. We chose a survey so that we could capture the perspectives of the potentially wide range of artists and designers that may be interested in creative entrepreneurship. The goals of the survey were to:

- Begin to define the high level steps of a creative entrepreneur's journey or journeys
- Start to define the profiles of artists and designers who would derive the most value from an initiative like CRAFT
- Collect initial data points on pains, gains and jobs to be done to inform value proposition work

The survey was distributed through the Centre for Emerging Artists and Designers social media account. It was live for one week and **twenty-four responses** were collected.



SURVEY RESPONSES

92% IDENTIFIED AS **WOMEN**

63% **ATTENDED** OCADU

38% IDENTIFIED AS **ARTIST**
25% **CREATOR** / 21% **MAKER** / 13% **DESIGNER**

0% IDENTIFIED AS **ENTREPRENEUR**

92% **CONSIDERED** STARTING A BUSINESS
TO SELL WHAT THEY CREATE

58% **CURRENTLY** HAVE A BUSINESS
TO SELL WHAT THEY CREATE

100% OF THOSE WITH BUSINESSES
SELL ONLINE

Creative Interviews

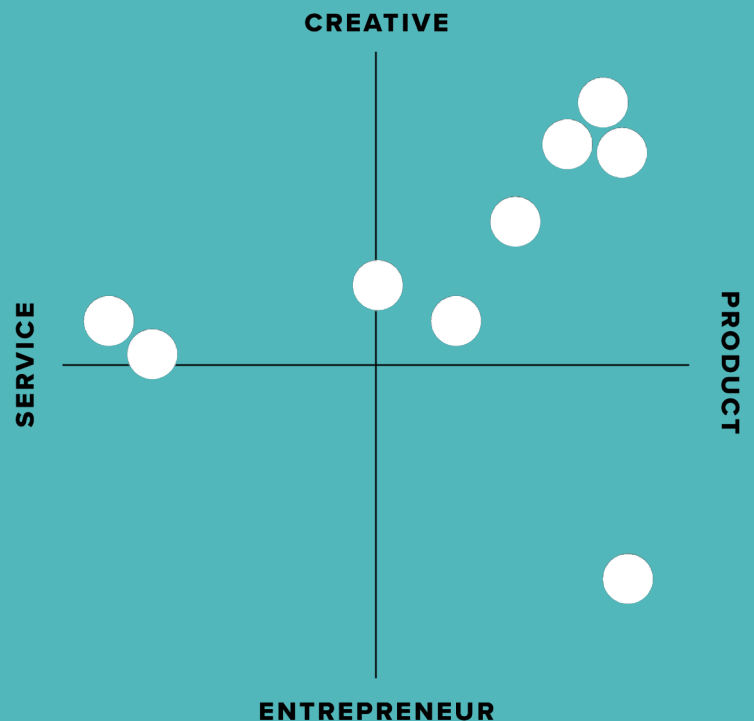
We planned for 5-10 semi-structured interviews with artists and designers to help us dive deep into the experience and needs of creatives. The interview participants did not need to be affiliated with OCADU, but they did need to have some connection to entrepreneurship – either by having tried to launch a business before, or seriously considered it. In consultation with OCADU Co, stakeholders and our personal networks, creatives were identified for interviews with the goals of:

- Understanding the full experience of creative entrepreneurs, including the thoughts and feelings during each stage of their journey.
- Understanding the differences in needs and journey between different types of creative entrepreneurs (including artists, designers, service-providers and product-makers)
- Identifying pains, gains, and jobs to be done to inform value proposition work

We completed **nine interviews** with creatives.

The people we interviewed ranged in what they made/created/designed (from **products** to **services**), and they all identified as **creatives** but not all of them identified as **entrepreneurs**.

We interviewed a ceramic artist, an Indigenous beadworker, a letterpress designer, a paper-cut artist, a YouTube sewing influencer, an illustrating marketer, children's toy maker, art apparel brand and a graphic designer. The creatives ranged from a new mom who has a new idea she is dreaming about monetizing to a mature graduate student who has started her first business selling art apparel.



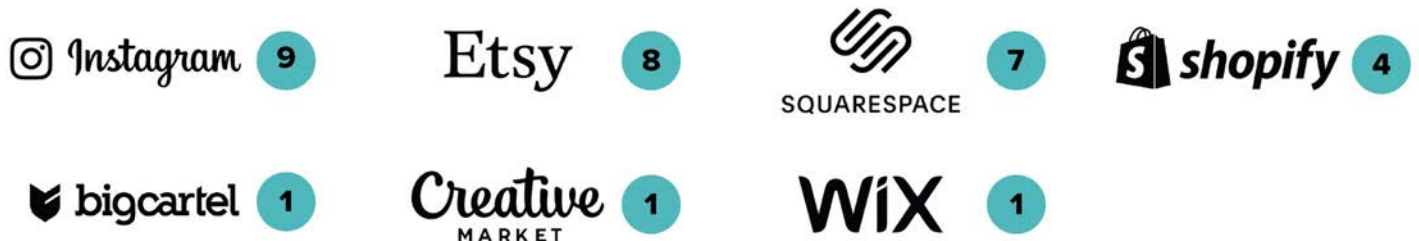
Secondary Research

We identified areas where secondary research could supplement and augment our primary research. In particular, secondary research was important to help us understand the variety of platforms and resources currently available to and used by creatives.

Etsy stood out as the main competitor and platform with the largest stake in online marketplaces. Therefore, we made sure to seek out Etsy's own global reports and other available statistics. We also looked at the personal stories of creatives using Etsy, specifically why they left the platform after using it. We then broadened our research to involve alternatives to Etsy and looked at the competitive landscape for marketplace platforms, in particular, the different platforms and ways creatives in our survey and interviews expressed using to sell their products or services online.

To supplement our knowledge of the learning resources available to creative entrepreneurs through OCADU, we also looked at the offerings of Continuing Studies, and mapped out what courses they offered based on the different categories needed for entrepreneurship.

TOP PLATFORMS USED FOR SELLING / # of mentions in interviews & survey



OF OCADU CONTINUING STUDIES COURSES OFFERED



FINDINGS /

**Who are our
target users?**

Who are our target users?

Our first primary research question was:

How might we define the target user for CRAFT?

To answer this question, we synthesized and analyzed our research data using a variety of methods and maps including behaviour maps, journey maps, stakeholder maps and 2x2 diagrams. These artifacts can be found in Appendix A.

In this chapter, we will walk you through our synthesis and analysis including:

- The user personas that emerged from our research
- An analysis of needs for these user personas
- An analysis of the journey our user personas generally go through as they explore entrepreneurship

At the end of this chapter we will present our **recommendations on how CRAFT might define its target user** and **identify leverage points** on the target user's journey where CRAFT might bring the most value.

User Personas

While all of our interview participants identified as **creatives**, not all felt comfortable identifying themselves as **entrepreneurs**. Instead, a spectrum emerged.



The Spectrum of Creative Entrepreneurship

On one end of the spectrum is the **Pure Creative** – a persona representing the artists and designers that have no experience or interest in selling their work. On the other end of the spectrum is the **Pure Entrepreneur** – a persona representing entrepreneurs who have no creative component to their business. Neither of these personas represent a plausible target user base for CRAFT.

However, in the middle, we identified three personas that *may* be plausible target user bases for CRAFT – **The Creative**, **The Creative Based Entrepreneur**, and **The Creatively Inspired Entrepreneur**.



The Creative

Examples Ceramicist,
Jewellery maker, Illustrator



The Creative Based Entrepreneur

Examples Brand strategist,
DIY influencer, Children's art
teacher



The Creatively Inspired Entrepreneur

Examples Online platform
that sells art prints, art apparel
seller (third-party broker)

Persona Deep Dive



The Creative



The Creative Based Entrepreneur



The Creatively Inspired Entrepreneur

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|
| Who are they | This persona identifies strongly as creative, but not as an entrepreneur. They may have fallen into entrepreneurship unintentionally as social media followers have requested to purchase their work. Creative fulfillment is their biggest driver. | This persona is focused on building a business through their creative work and building their personal brand. They work hard to build and grow their business, constantly seeking out new ways to learn. Their creative passion is core to their business and life. | While creatively-inspired, this persona is an entrepreneur first. Their primary mission is to grow their business. What separates them from a pure entrepreneur is that the product or service they sell is related to some sort of creative work (either their own or the work of others). |
| Goals | Make enough money to sustain their creative work. | Doing what they love and supporting their family at the same time. | Build business to be profitable and sustainable. |
| | Finding a community of like-minded creatively driven people. | A strong personal brand that enables business growth. | Systems and processes built so they don't need to work all the time. |
| Frustrations | Admin work (packing shipments, doing taxes). Overwhelm and confusion with what to do to start and run a business. | Wading through all the content out there to learn how to strategically grow a creative business. Resources that are a waste of their time. | Access to funding, coaching and mentorship. Resources that are a waste of their time. |

Persona Needs



The Creative



The Creative Based Entrepreneur



The Creatively Inspired Entrepreneur

Most
Important



Creative Fulfillment

Learning

Learning

Community

Income

Income

Income

Creative Fulfillment

Community

Learning

Community

For each of our personas, we conducted a Needs Analysis. We discovered that needs clustered into the themes of **Creative Fulfillment**, **Community**, **Income**, and **Learning** and for each persona, the order in which they needed each theme differed.

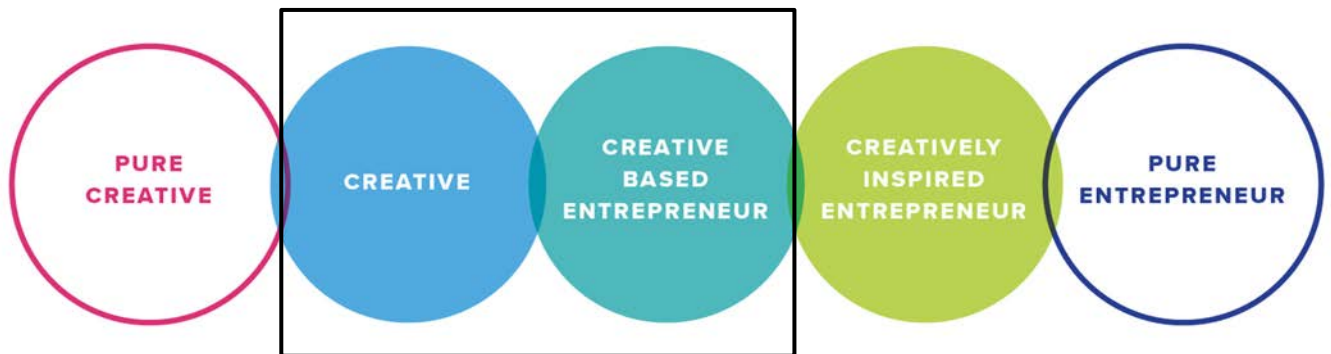
For **The Creative** creative fulfillment is their primary need. They often seek a community of like-minded creatives who share similar values. Income is only so important so that it enables them to have time and space to create.

The Creative Based Entrepreneurs are voracious learners. They are always trying to find ways to learn how to grow their business and build their income. Creative fulfillment is important as well, but not to the point that their income suffers.

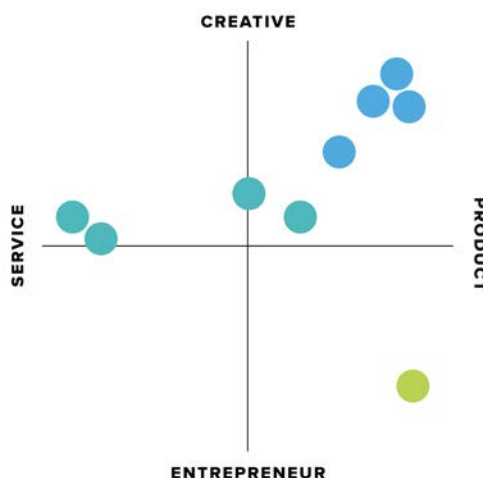
For **The Creatively Inspired Entrepreneur**, creative fulfillment is not an expressed need. Their most important need is learning how to grow their business and build their income.

Target User Recommendations

Our recommendation is that OCADU should start by targeting creatives that are represented by **The Creative** and **The Creative Based Entrepreneur** personas for the founding group of members. Based on our analysis, these personas are those whose needs most closely align with the CRAFT vision.



We recommend these two personas because they both have: **a strong connection to their creative work**, as well as **a desire to build an income stream** from their creative work. While the order of these needs differ for each persona, there are still shared values that complement **a community based on creative fulfillment and creative empowerment**. We also think it's important that these creatives are **solo entrepreneurs** (and not-startups) to build community and trust between the founding members.

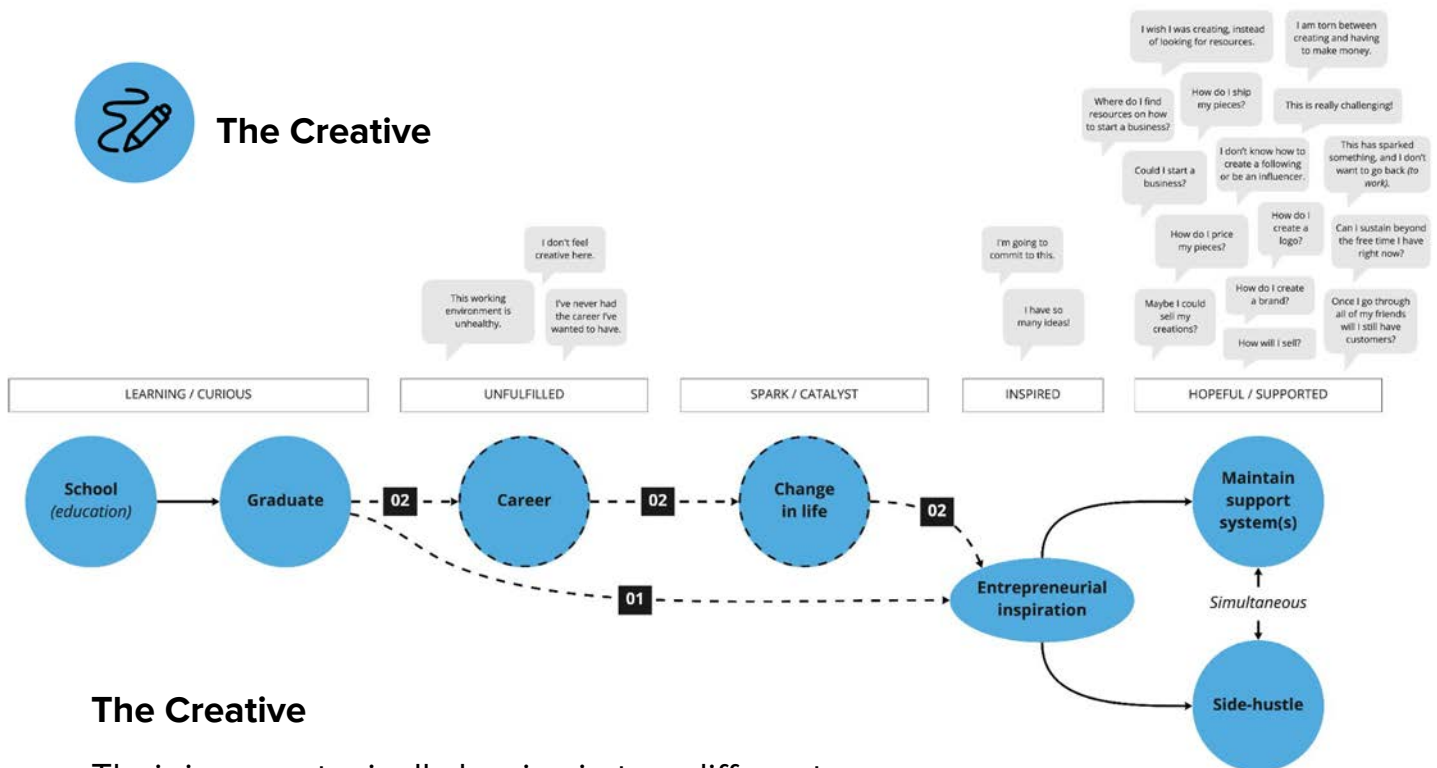


Interview participants divided by persona type. We recommend creatives who have shared values of creative fulfillment – no matter whether they make a product or a deliver a service.

We believe that **The Creatively Inspired Entrepreneurs** would be better served by a business-skills only focused initiative since creative fulfillment is not one of their core needs.

Creative Entrepreneurship Journeys

For each recommended persona, we've outlined their typical creative entrepreneurship journey. After taking you through their journeys, we will identify leverage points where we recommend membership with CRAFT that may add the most value.



The Creative

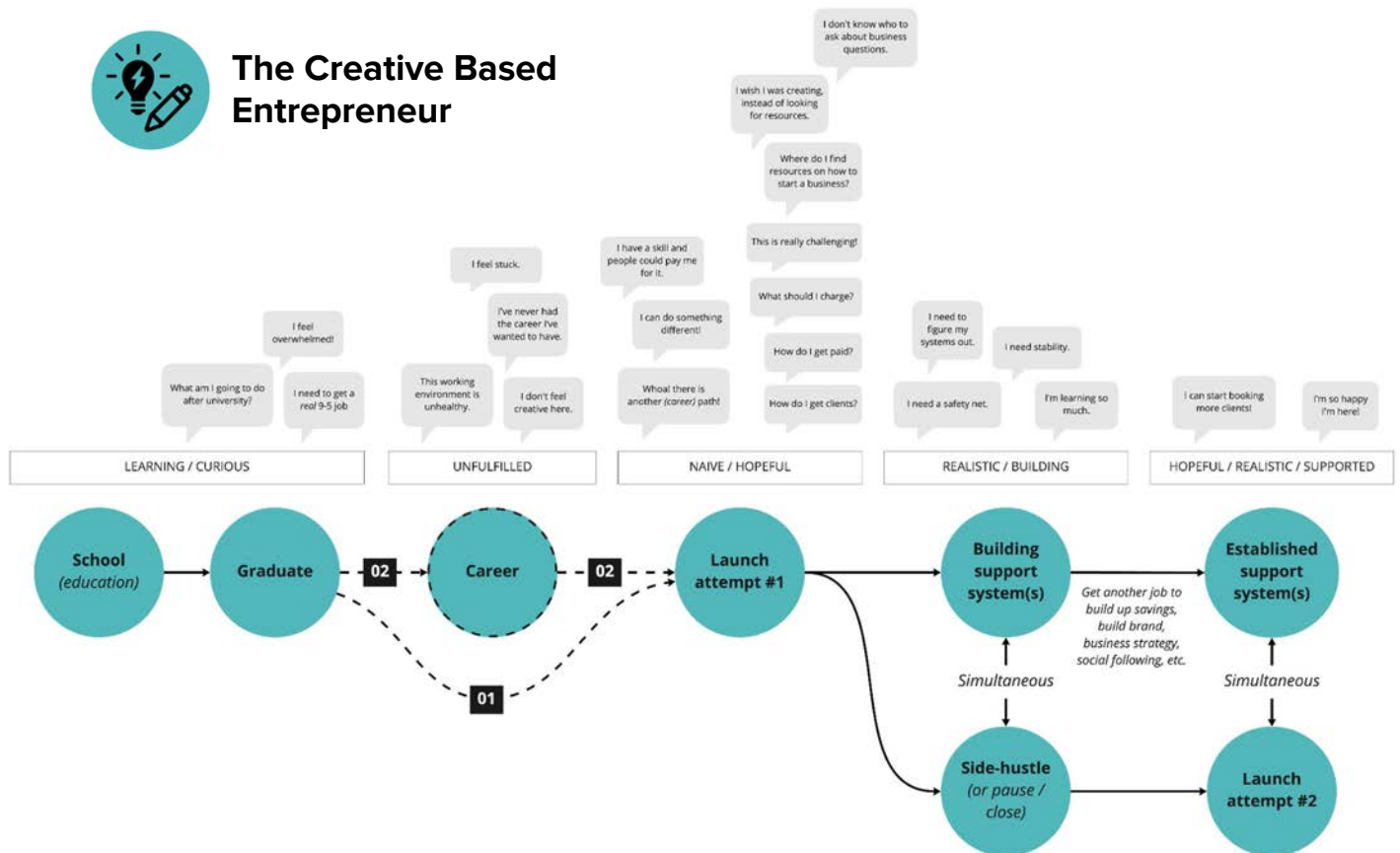
Their journey typically begins in two different ways:

01 / May or may not have formal art education, but have always been creative and working on their craft.

02 / May or may not have formal art education. Start career, but feel unfulfilled, then a change occurs (spark/catalyst). This could be a loss of a job, moving, maternity leave, children have grown, COVID-19, etc. This change sparks in them a new (or dormant) sense of inspiration.

Typically, this entrepreneurial inspiration event occurs (perhaps someone on social media reaches out to buy their work, or they see the success of another creative friend) and they start to pursue selling their work. At this time, they typically simultaneously start building or maintaining a financial support system (e.g., government assistance, part-time job(s), lower cost of living, etc.). These supports are important because they can feel “free” to create as the burden to support themselves solely from their creating isn’t necessary.

Creative Entrepreneurship Journeys



The Creative Based Entrepreneur

The journey typically begins in two different ways:

01 / Have some sort of formal education, and leaving school they launch their first business (often with limited success).

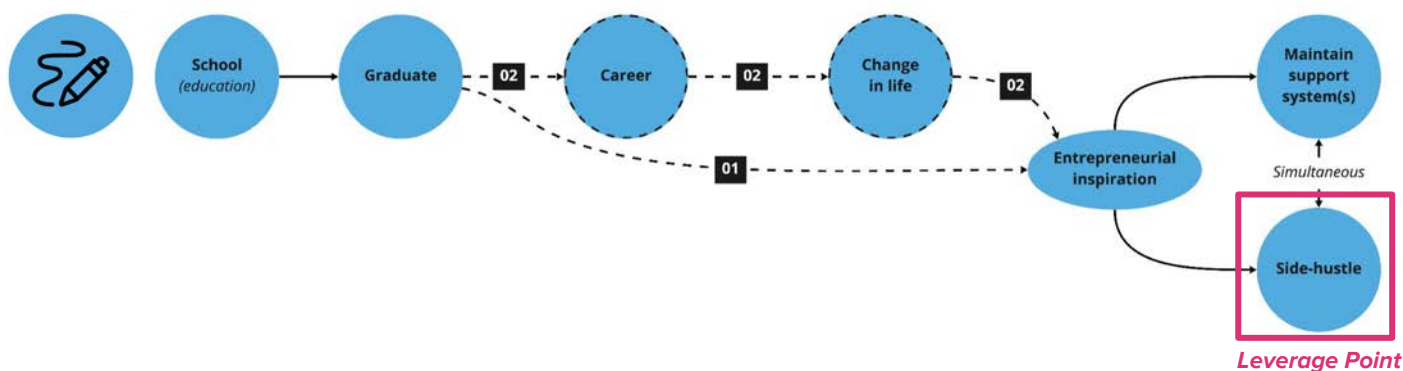
02 / Have some sort of formal education, and begin a career after graduation (often they don't know what else is possible). This career leaves them feeling unfulfilled and stuck so they launch their first business (often with limited success).

Their first lackluster attempt helps them realize that they need more business strategy knowledge, so they typically move the business to a side-hustle (or even pause/close first business) and begin building support (e.g., using another job to build up savings, take courses to learn more about business strategy, etc.). Once their support is established and they feel more secure, they attempt to launch the side-hustle as a full-time business or launch a completely new endeavour.

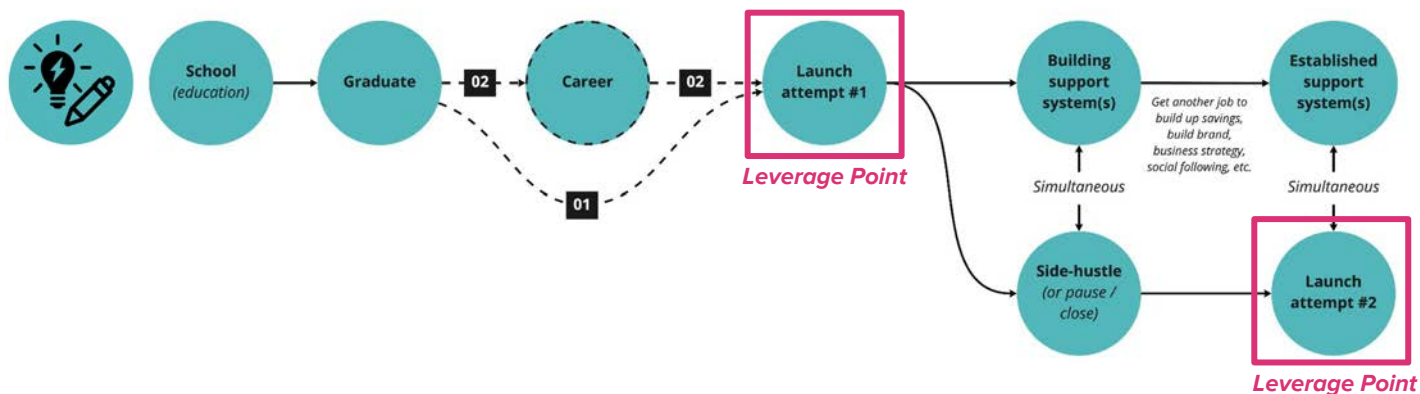
Recommended Leverage Points

During our analysis, we identified key leverage points on the creative entrepreneurship journey where we propose membership with CRAFT could add the most value.

For **The Creative**, the key leverage point is right as they start building their side hustle. At this point, they already have identified creative entrepreneurship as a **desirable** path for themselves, and need the support necessary to make it **viable**. This also coincides with their efforts to build and maintain their support system, which makes a creative entrepreneurship future more **feasible**.



For **The Creative Based Entrepreneur**, we have identified two leverage points. The first is right when they graduate, *before* they launch their first venture to improve their chances of launching a **viable** business the first time (and helping them become aware of the entrepreneurship path). The second leverage point is before their second attempt at launching. By this time, they are clear about the support they need and have built up the support systems to make creative entrepreneurship **feasible** and **desirable** for them. They will be clear on what value they need from the CRAFT resources and community.



Summary of Recommendations

Returning to research question, **how might we define the target user for CRAFT?**

We recommend that the founding members be made up of a mix of creatives that are represented by **The Creative** and **The Creative Based Entrepreneur** personas.

We think it is important the both personas be represented in the founding group, because their shared-but-differently-prioritized values may provide a **balancing effect**. The Creative Based Entrepreneurs will push The Creatives to be more strategic and ambitious in growing their businesses and The Creatives will push The Creative Based Entrepreneurs to stay connected to their passion and retain their creative identities.

Here we can also answer the secondary research question, **what type of creative is this target user (Artist or designer? Product or service provider?)**

We believe that it doesn't matter. CRAFT can be **open to both product makers and service providers**. Based on our research, product makers and service providers have similar needs and questions about their creative entrepreneurship path, and both follow similar journeys.

The leverage points on those journeys have the following similar themes, across both recommended persona types and across service providers and product makers. At the leverage points identified:

- **The creatives have identified entrepreneurship as a desirable path forward but have questions on viability.**
- **The creatives have developed or are developing a support system to help them mitigate risk and ensure feasibility of this career path.**

For Creative Based Entrepreneurs, we've identified these conditions at two places on a typical journey. We recommend CRAFT recruits founding members that are at both stages – this will likely maximize peer learnings for those earlier in the journey, and may lead to an opportunity to source junior talent for those later in the journey

FINDINGS /

**What is our value
proposition?**

What is our value proposition?

Our second primary research question was:

How might we define the value proposition of the three pillars of CRAFT (learning, community and platform) to provide value for this target user?

To answer this question, we analyzed our research data using a **value proposition canvas** and completed a **landscape scan** to understand the competitive market of platforms available to creative.

In this chapter, we will walk you through our analysis including:

- An overview of the value proposition canvas process
- A deep dive into possible Gain Creators broken down by pillar
- A deep dive into Pain Relievers broken down by pillar
- Our Landscape Scan of the other platforms available to creatives, including the comparative positioning of CRAFT

At the end of this chapter we will present our **recommendations on how CRAFT may position itself** to provide the most value for its target user.

Value Proposition Canvas

To guide this analysis, we used the Value Proposition Canvas, a tool developed by Dr Alexander Osterwalder to help companies make sure that their product is designed in response to their user's needs.

The canvas guided us to cluster our insights about the target user into their **pains, gains, and jobs to be done**.

- **Jobs to be done** refer to what a target user needs to do in their life or work (functionally, emotionally, and socially).
- **Pains** refer to frustrations, confusions or annoyances that prevent the target user from getting their jobs done.
- **Gains** refer to what ambitions, goals or successes that would unlock more benefits or happiness for the target user.

Next, the canvas guided us to suggest products or services that may help our target user complete their jobs to be done. **For CRAFT, these products or services can be represented by the three pillars** (learning, community, and platform). We used the **pain relievers** and **gain creators** sections to brainstorm ways in which the three pillars could be designed and positioned to respond to our target users' pains and gains.

The full Value Proposition Canvas can be found in Appendix D. On the following pages, we will dive deeper into the specific pain relievers and gain creators we recommend for CRAFT to adopt in design and positioning.

Recommended Gain Creators

Gain creators are the ways in which the product or service might unlock the benefits or gains desired by the target user. We've broken down our recommendations of how CRAFT might best position itself or be designed to unlock gains for each persona by pillar:



The Creative

PLATFORM

Highlighting the creative, their story, and their inspiration along the product/service encouraging customers to get to know **the person and passion behind the work** and better understand the value.

COMMUNITY

Structures and environment that specifically supports **creative exploration and synergy with other members**. Members may work together to blend their styles into new types of products or new services.

LEARNING

A **guided learning path** that makes it clear what is essential knowledge for launching and growing a business and what is supplementary so members can organize and prioritize their time.



The Creative Based Entrepreneur

Platform design that allows the member to visually **present their personal brand** to build brand awareness with customers (as opposed to a platform like Etsy whose branding overtakes any individual shop's branding).

Structures and environment that specifically supports **apprenticeship and/or work-sharing** so that creatives later on in their journey can work with creatives earlier on in their journey (who would benefit from the experience).

A **curriculum that evolves with industry trends** that enables members to expand and/or adjust their business strategy in alignment with changing customer preferences and industry standards.

Recommended Pain Relievers

Pain relievers are the ways in which the product could alleviate the pains experienced by the target users. We've broken down our recommendations of how CRAFT might best position itself or be designed to alleviate pains for each persona by pillar:



The Creative

PLATFORM

Growing their following and posting to social media to attract customers can be tedious for creatives. **Shared marketing managed by CRAFT** (like members profiled on the CRAFT homepage) would leave members more time to focus on their work.

COMMUNITY

An enabling environment for creatives to **share the cost of hiring help** with other member for the time consuming aspects of their business that take away from their time to create – like video-editing for TikTok or shipping and packaging their work.

LEARNING

Knowing who to turn to for business (and specifically, tax) help and how much it will cost is a challenge. CRAFT could establish a set of resources and/or **professionals that understand creatives and are clear on cost.**



The Creative Based Entrepreneur

Getting customers to find their websites when searching for a service like brand strategy or website design can be challenging. Having a way for prospective customers to **search by service** through CRAFT would help members source more customers.

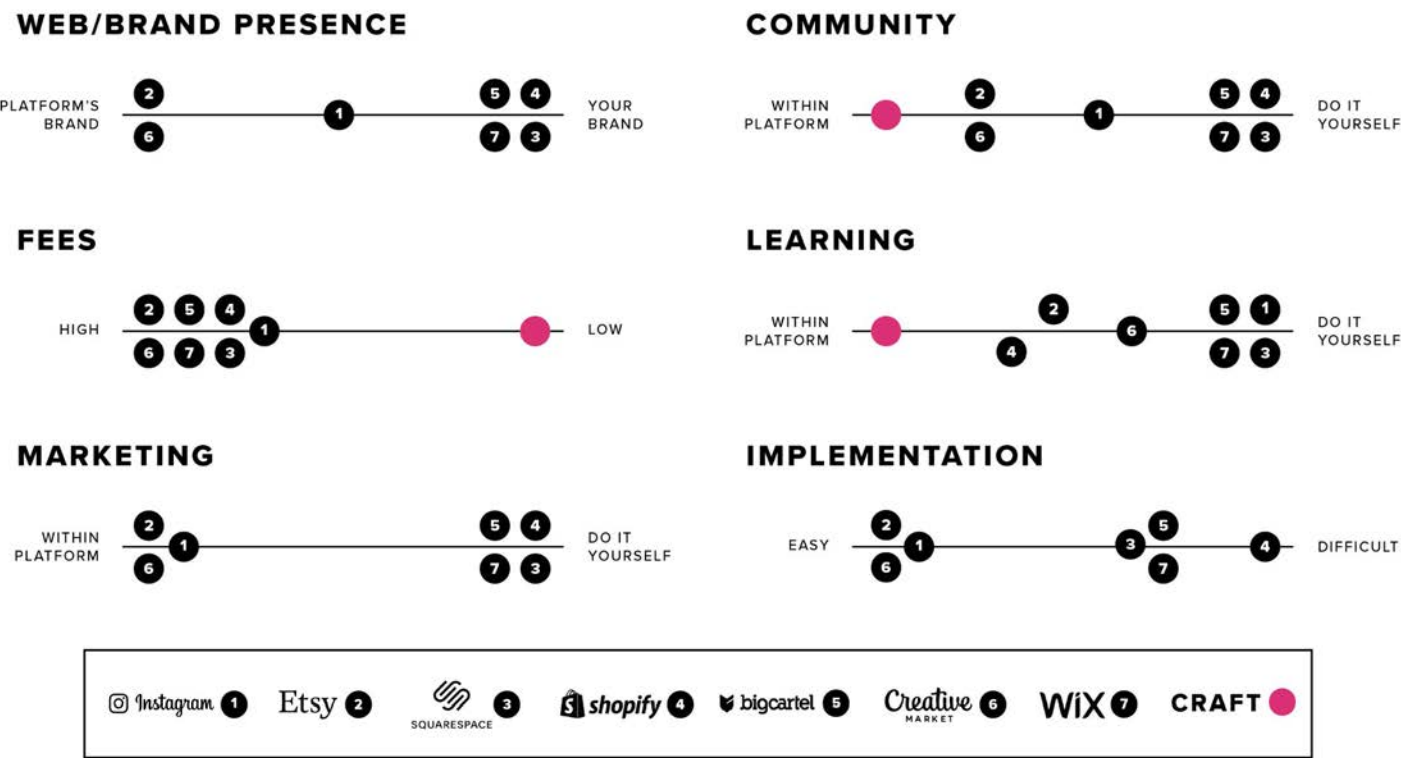
Building a business alone can not only be lonely, but also sometimes difficult to stay motivated and accountable. Structures for the **community members to engage in goal-setting and shared accountability** from their peers may alleviate this pain.

For those that want to go beyond the basics, Instead of having to spend time finding extra learning resources and not being sure of how helpful they are, CRAFT could help members save time and maximize learning by having an **easy to access, curated set of learning content** on specific subjects.

Landscape Scan

To better understand how CRAFT’s positioning could compete with other platforms available to creatives, we conducted a landscape scan. Among the top platforms mentioned by the creatives interviewed and surveyed, the areas where CRAFT might position itself as a leader are with **fees**, **community** and **learning**. Fees would be the top area to position, as all platforms mentioned are charging fees to post and are taking commission, which was a top pain point the creatives shared.

Many of these platforms are leaders in the ecommerce space and have successfully enabled consumers to purchase work designed or made by creatives. However, many of the creatives we interviewed who have used platforms that use “within platform” marketing (e.g., global search, keywords, & categories) spoke about frustrations with the **oversaturation of similar or inferior products** that prevent customers from finding their work and drive down prices. Many were using outside methods (like promoting on Instagram) to stand out. **Leveraging the community network and thoughtful curation** may be another way to differentiate CRAFT in a competitive market.



The full Landscape Scan can be found in Appendix E.
Platforms shown are based on “Top Platforms Used for Selling” from Page 10.

Summary of Recommendations

Returning to research question, **how might we define the value proposition of the three pillars of CRAFT (learning, community and platform) to provide value for this target user?**

We recommend that for CRAFT to best provide value for the target users:

The platform:

- be designed in a way that allows members to express their personal brand and share their story and inspiration with potential buyers.
- funnel new customers to find members work through shared marketing and enabling searching for services.

The community:

- build structures to enable creative partnerships and apprenticeships to emerge.
- enable communities of sharing, including sharing the cost of resources and accountability sharing opportunities.

The learning:

- be guided and evolving with the industry.
- provide clarity, cost, and curation when extra help or knowledge is needed or desired.

Here we can also answer the secondary research question, **how might CRAFT's positioning fit into the existing landscape of resources and platforms available to our target user?**

Based on our analysis of the existing platforms for creatives to sell their work, we believe CRAFT's differentiation will likely be in its fee structures, its community-based model, and its affiliated learning resources.

Recommendations For Next Steps /

Founding Members

When CRAFT recruits its group of founding members later this year, we recommend:

- There be a mix of members representing **The Creative** and **The Creative Based Entrepreneur** personas (because of their creative values and increased capacity for risk).
- Those that represent **The Creative Based Entrepreneur** persona, be those early in their journey (perhaps pre-first launch) and later in their journey (post-first launch but pre-second launch)
- All members be affiliated with OCADU (either students or alumni of the Undergraduate Programs, Graduate Programs or Continuing Studies). We see the OCADU brand being a key part of the identity of the platform, and recommend that part of the founding members' challenge be to infuse the unique OCADU spirit and approach into the co-design and co-governance of CRAFT.
- That founding members be specifically those that have the supports in place to put time and energy into the process of co-design and co-governance. For all persona types, having enough time repeatedly came up as a challenge. CRAFT will need to compensate founding members for their time, or set up the founding membership in a way that the value is immediately clear.

Open Questions

Throughout the course of this research, some questions emerged that were beyond the scope of this project, but may be relevant to future work undertaken by the CRAFT team.

- Interview participants shared that they felt more connected to creative communities in person (like studios or shared workspaces) than online communities. Might there need to be an in person element to CRAFT to foster depth of connection (like a studio, workspace, or lounge space)?
- Loneliness and need for community was strongly expressed in our research, but how much is that influenced by pandemic-induced isolation? What will the need for community be post-COVID?
- What is the best way for CRAFT to complement existing Creative Entrepreneurship resources offered by Continuing Studies? Could CRAFT become an experiential learning component of that certificate program? Same for Undergraduates in certain OCADU programs.
- Many existing ecommerce platforms already available have robust analytical and technical teams that are constantly iterating and improving functionality on their platforms. How might CRAFT compete without those resources?
- Will members want to keep their personal websites up along with CRAFT? What about their Etsy shops? Is there a role for CRAFT as an aggregator of a creative's online presences?
- Might CRAFT give social clout by creating "verification" or awarding badges like "verified OCADU maker"?
- Might CRAFT build a collective environment – similar to artist collectives – where because they are all "grouped" together they pull on each others network and popularity organically?
- To draw upon what works to build businesses in other sectors, might the learning component of CRAFT function like an incubator or accelerator?
- Might CRAFT be an opportunity for newcomers who face challenges finding creative work because of their lack of Canadian experience?

Recommended Next Steps

While our research was informative and insightful, it is just the beginning! Because of our limitations of time and the limits inherent to being virtual-only in the pandemic, our sample was small and therefore, many perspectives are likely missing.

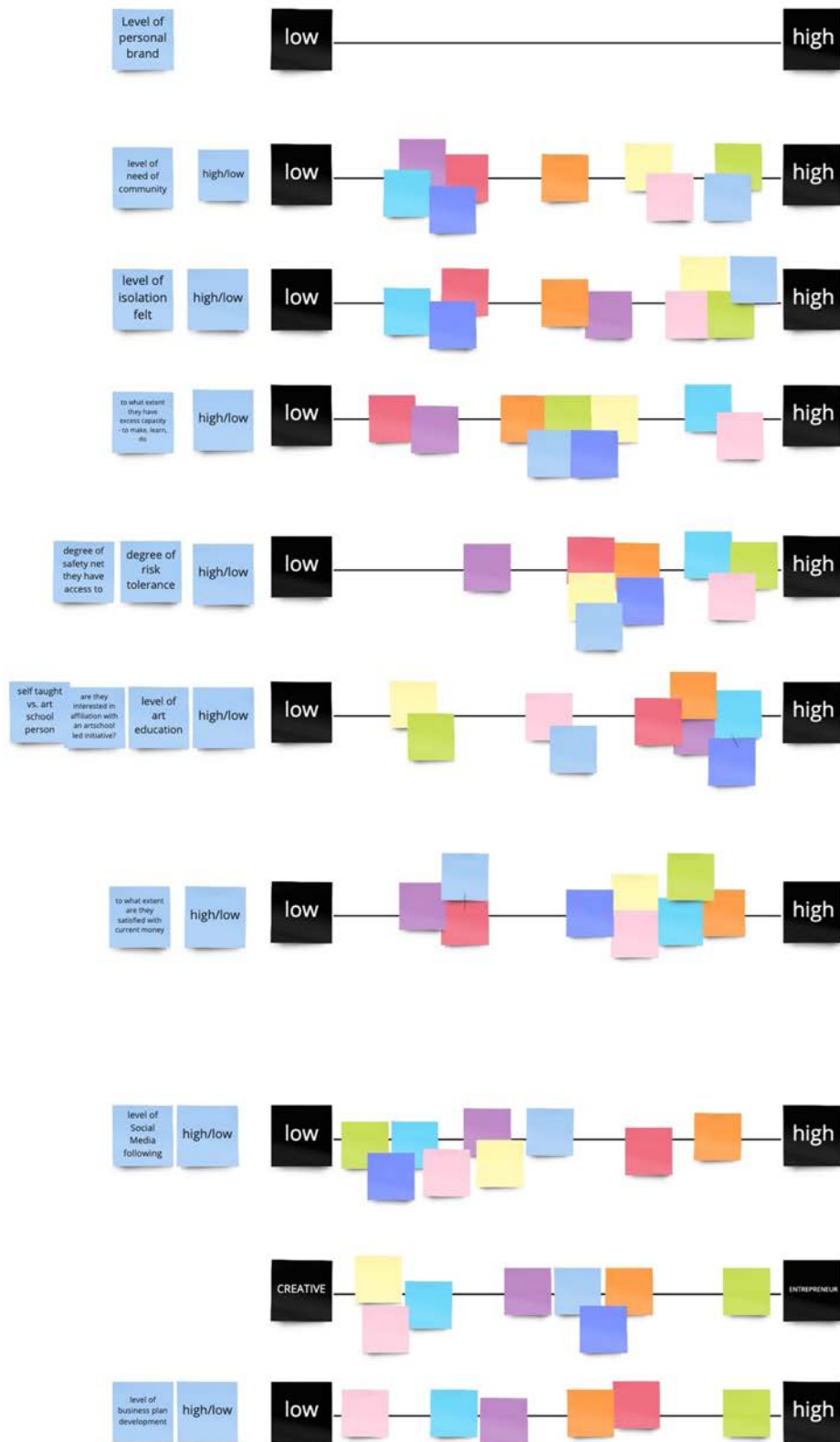
We recommend that OCADU and the CRAFT team use our recommendations and insights as initial hypotheses to inform further research. To do this, we recommend:

- Further creative interviews be conducted (our survey respondents have all indicated whether they would be open to being interviewed).
- The survey, or interviews, be conducted with a wider OCADU audience (perhaps an alumni network and/or through specific programs like Grad Studies).

Appendices /

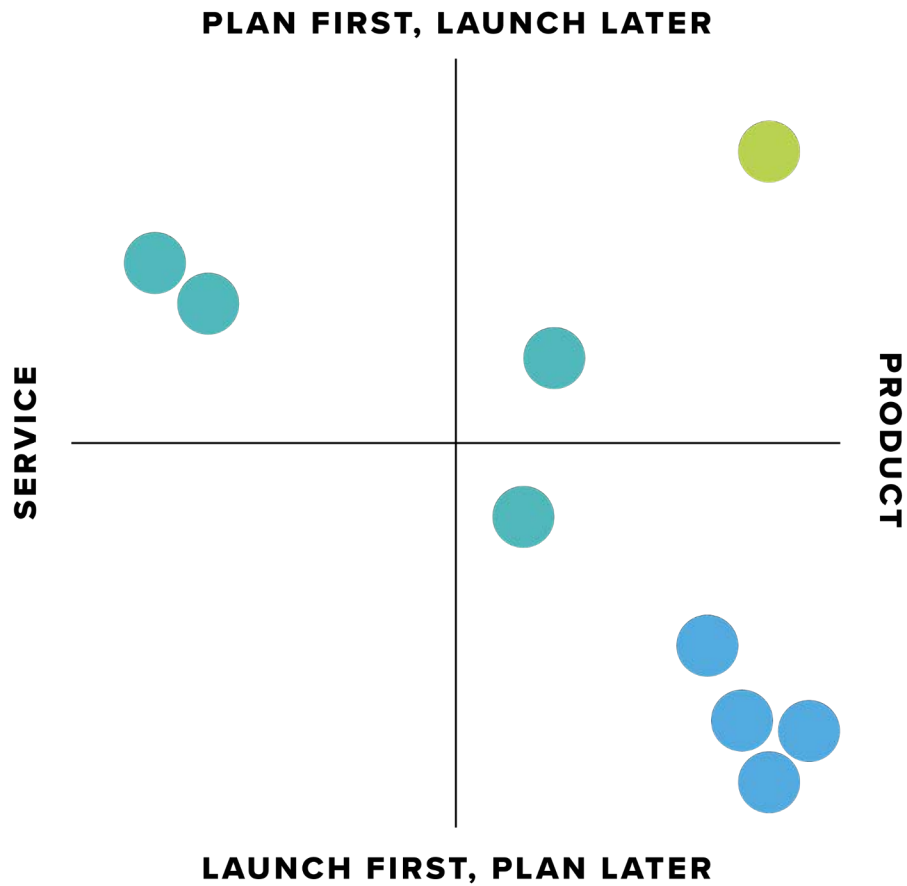
APPENDIX A

Behaviour Mapping (Personas)






APPENDIX A

Behaviour Mapping (Personas)

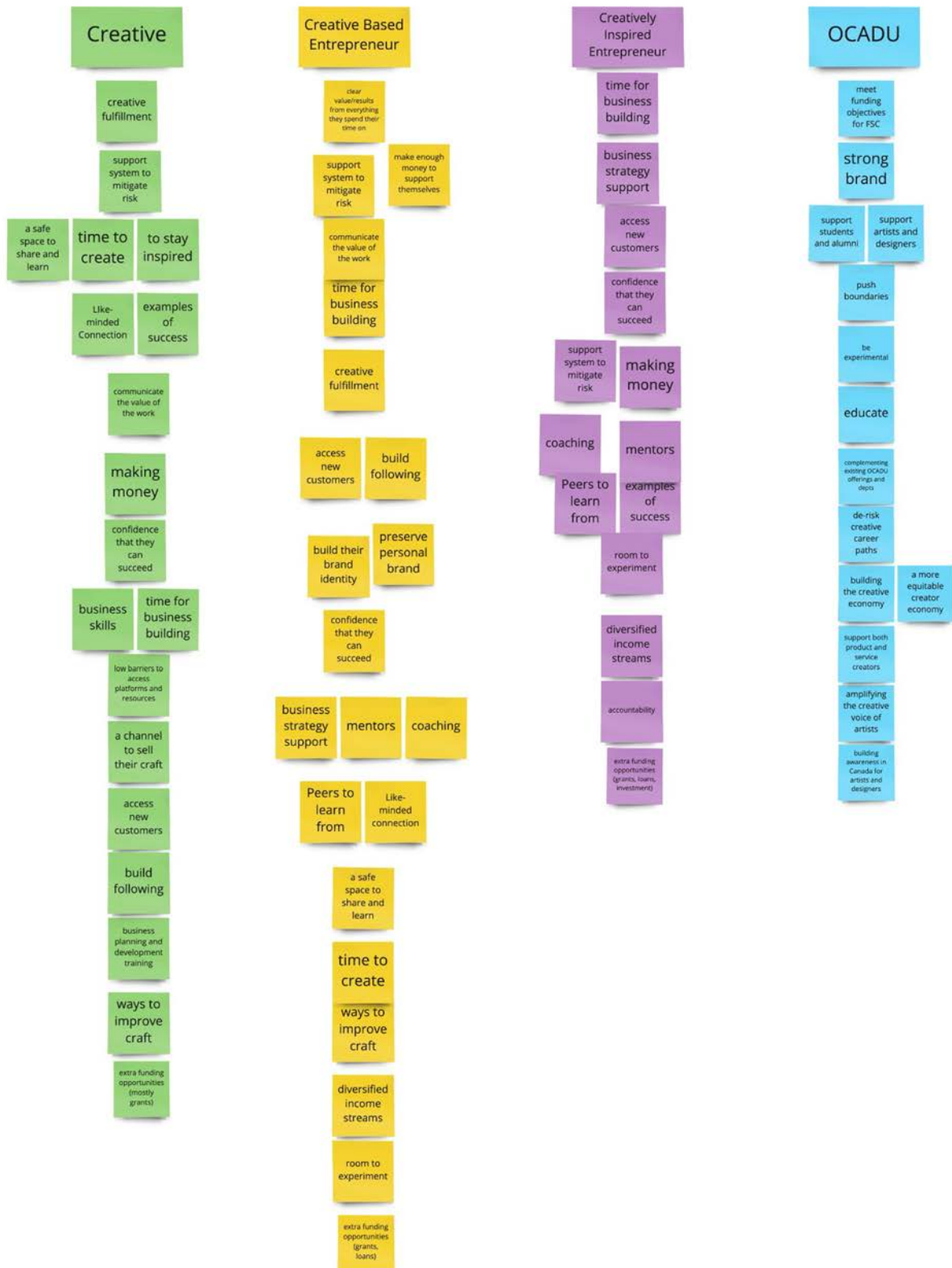


LEGEND

-  The Creative Persona
-  The Creatively Inspired Entrepreneur Persona
-  The Creative Based Entrepreneur Persona

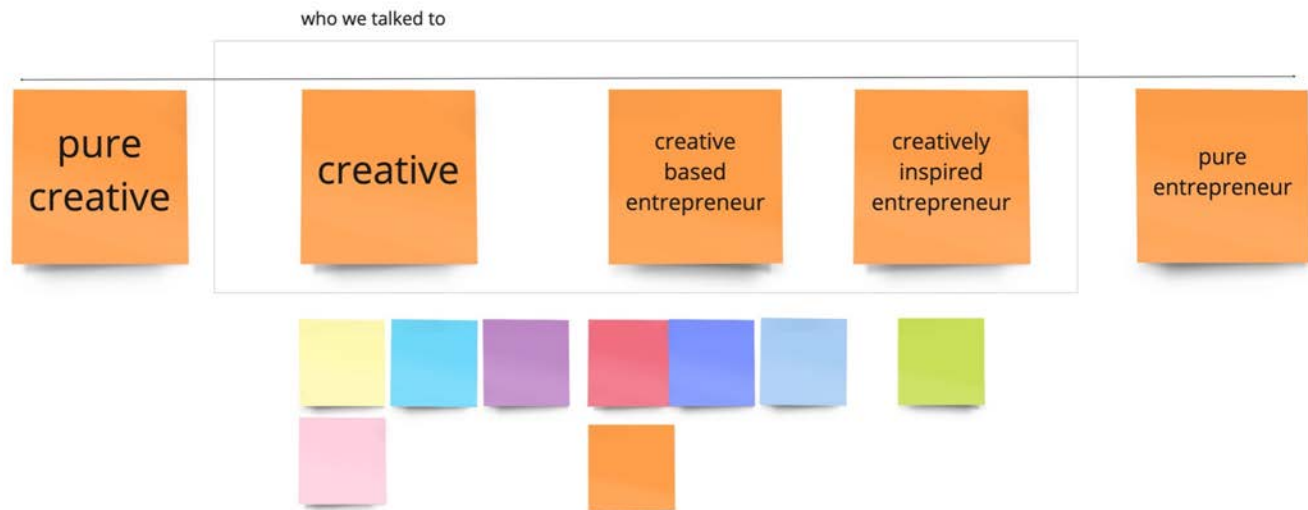
APPENDIX B

Stakeholder Needs Matrix



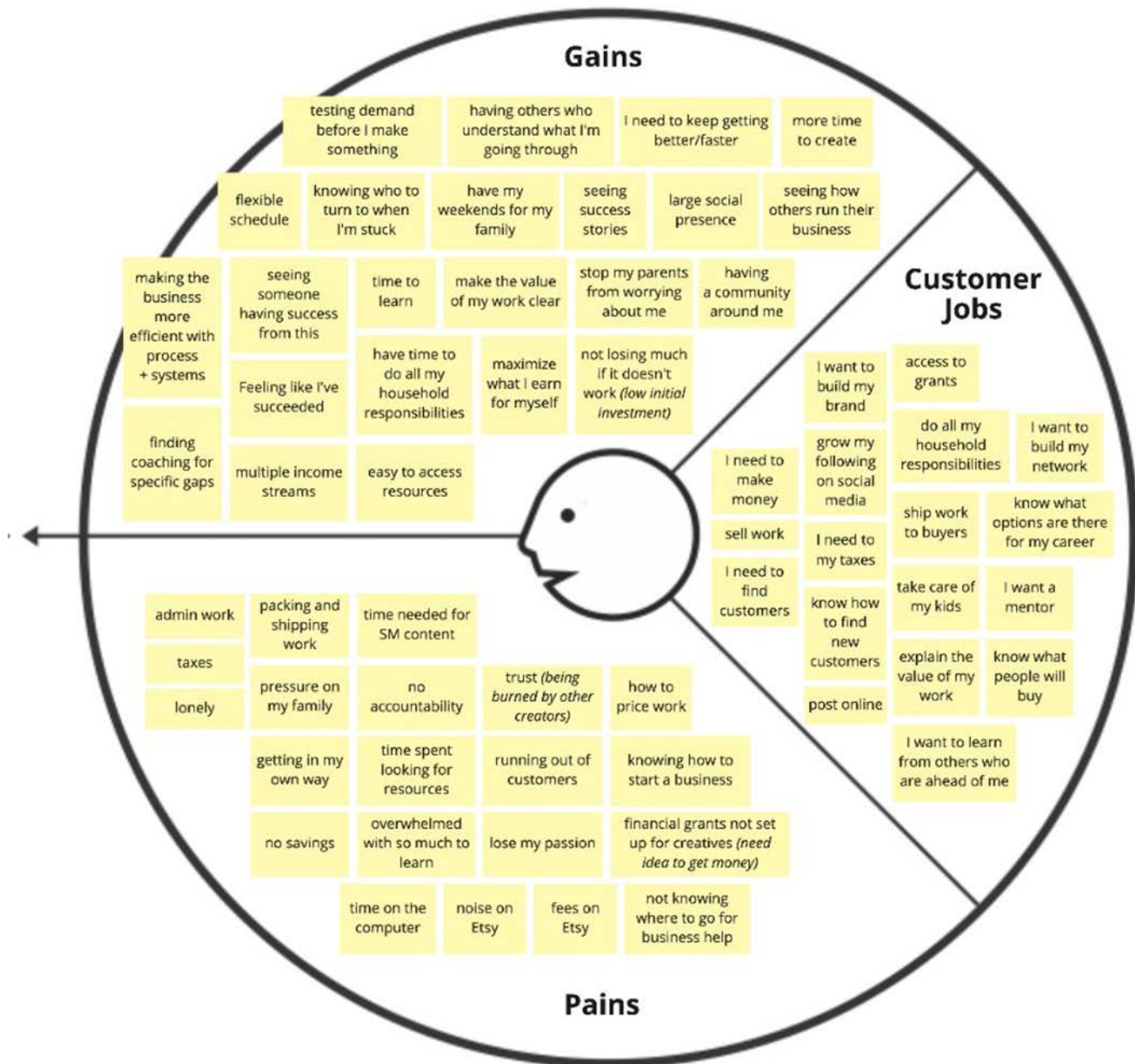
APPENDIX C

Personas: Creative Spectrum



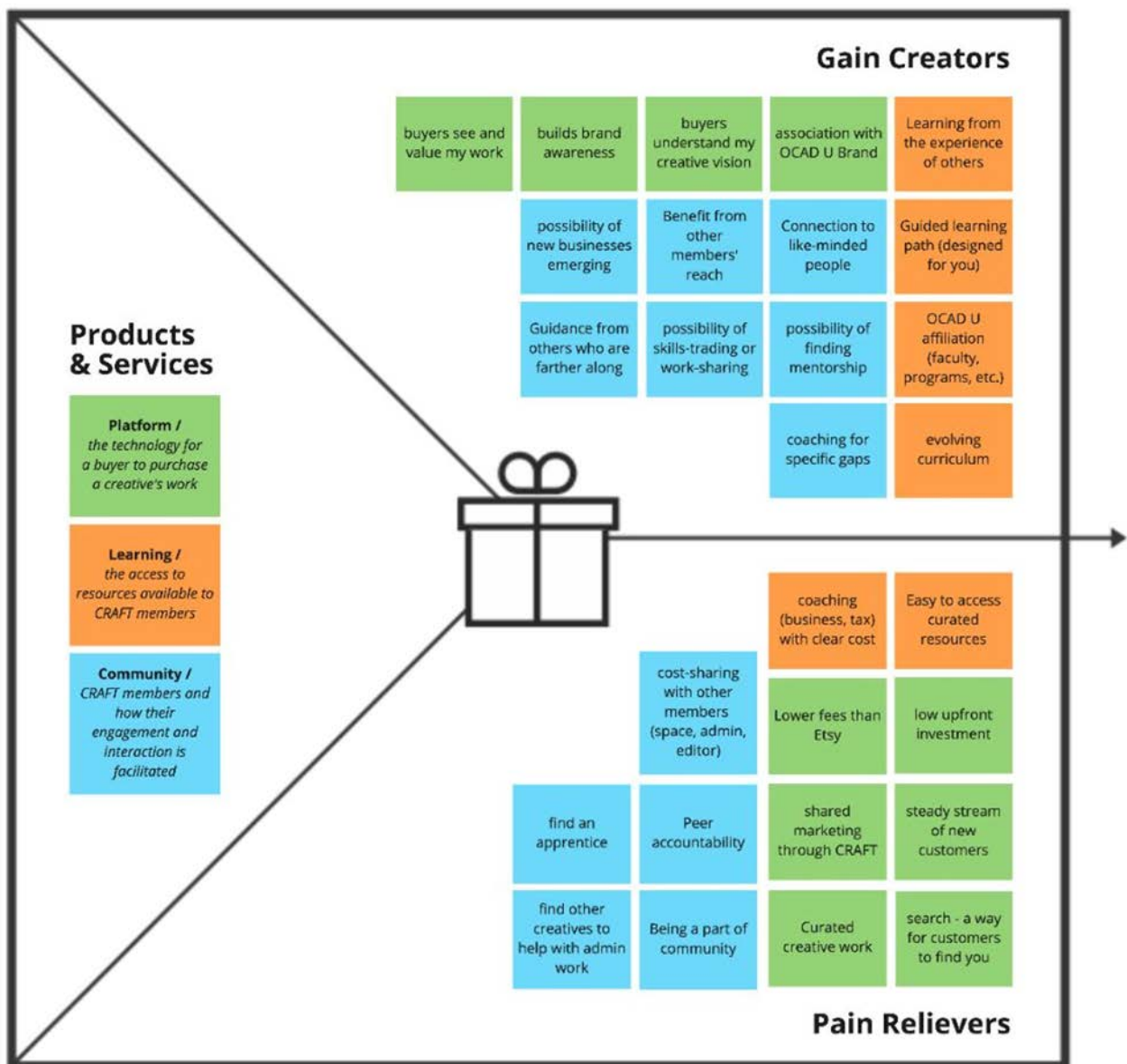
APPENDIX D

Value Proposition Canvas (Client Canvas)



APPENDIX D

Value Proposition Canvas (Product Canvas)



APPENDIX E

Works Consulted for the Landscape Scan

Etsy

- [Etsy Global Seller Census 2019](#)
- [Etsy Statistics, Users, Usage, Demographics \(2021 Report\)](#)
- [Etsy sellers tend to be young, female and educated](#)
- [UX Evolutions: How Etsy Creates Customer-Centric Experiences for Millions of Users](#)
- Statistics: [Most popular categories among handmade Etsy sellers worldwide as of June 2020, by share of sellers](#)
- Statistics: [Self-identification and motivation of Etsy sellers as of 2020](#)
- Personal stories ([01](#)) ([02](#))

Competitive Analysis

- [Best Platform to Sell Online in 2021: An In-Depth Analysis](#)
- [A Beginner's Guide to Selling Products Online](#)
- [8 Best Places to Sell Your Products Online \(& How to Choose the Right One for You\)](#)
- [Selling on Etsy vs. Creative Market](#)
- [Etsy Pros & Cons from Sellers](#)
- [11 Etsy Alternatives for Your Online Store](#)
- [Etsy Alternatives: How to sell your items beyond Etsy](#)

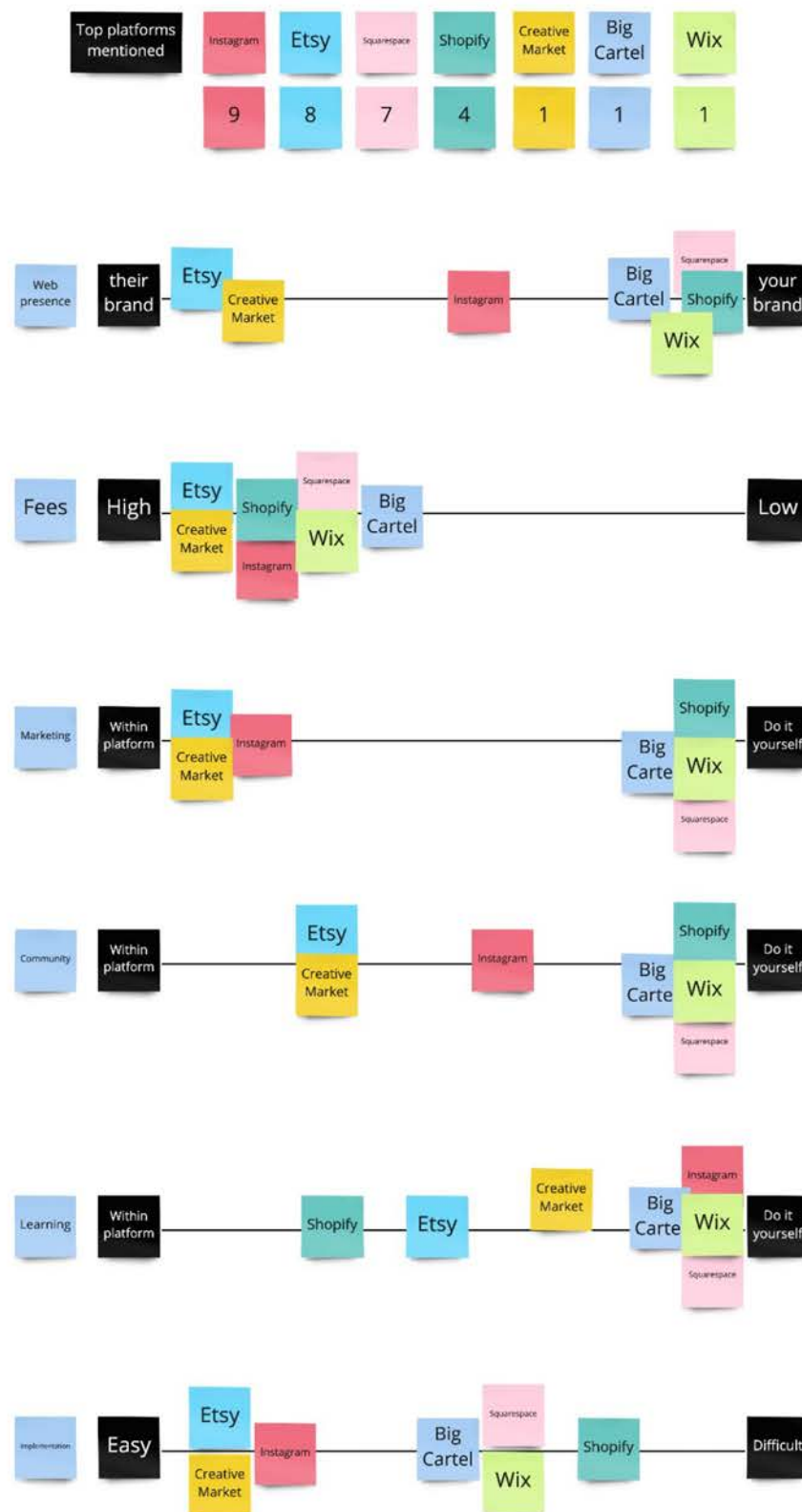
APPENDIX E

Competitive Analysis

| | Web Presence | Fees | Marketing | Community | Learning? | Implementation | Shipping? | Analytics | More |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Etsy | Not necessary, etsy profile/shop is your web presence (marketplace shop) | a listing fee (0.2) + a sales fee (5%) + a credit card fee (3%) + Fee per order (0.25) | Built-in audience but getting noticed is hard (needle in a haystack) | Loyal Etsy community (of both customers and sellers) | | Easy to set up shop | | Built in and comprehensive | |
| Shopify | Website builder with templates, full control over brand (Standalone site) | Sales fee (2%) + Credit card fee (2.9%) + fee per order (0.3) (Basic shopify \$29/per month, the fees goes down at higher pay levels) | None - you drive traffic to your site | None (not as organic/built in) | Shopify Blog and Experts (online community of sellers) | More work upfront to build the site | | built-in analytics for your product sales & marketing efforts | Once someone's on your site, they don't get distracted by other sellers' products |
| Creative Market | Not necessary, CM shop is your web presence (marketplace shop) | transaction fee (40%) + withholding tax rate (30%) + payment fee (\$0 or 1% for paypal) | Built-in audience, competing with MANY other digital items | Loyal CM customers | | Easy to set up shop | No shipping (all digital) | Less than others, basically just conversion rates | |
| Instagram | Instagram profile | | The algorithm and shop tab goes straight to an audience | Really easy to interact with your own audience (creating social proof) | | | | | Goes through instagram checkout, and lose some of the email and customer information |
| Zazzle | | zazzle takes a service fee + but you set your commission rate | | | | | No shipping (all digital / drop shipped) | | |
| Amazon & Amazon Handmade | (marketplace shop) | starts at \$40/month plus 15% commission | Amazon's brand identity and insane traffic volumes (but also more competition between sellers) | | | | | | |
| Squarespace (similar to Shopify, but a Commerce plan starts at \$26/month with no transaction fees. Only pay for credit card fees) | | | | | | | | | |
| Aftcra | Use Aftcra interface is y | free to use, but it does take a 7% commission | no competition from mass-produced goods, you will have a smaller market than you would with some other Etsy alternatives | | | | | | |
| IndieMade | IndieMade is your website builder (Standalone shop) | basic plan of \$4.95/month for ten products with no transaction fees | None - you drive traffic to your site | lack the involved community | | | | | can connect to your Etsy account |
| Storenvy | Not necessary, Storenvy shop is your web presence (marketplace shop) | fees are a 10% commission from each sale, but it is otherwise free to use. | | cater primarily to a young, hip demographic (a bit exclusive and snobby) | | | | | |
| Zibbet | ability to make a standalone site and an Etsy-type marketplace shop | \$5/month if you need more than the ten listings available for the free account | Shorter reach, but is improving that through a growing list of sales channels (like Etsy, Facebook Shop, Instagram, and more) | | | | | | |
| Society6 | Marketplace shop | \$1 verification fee. The platform handles all listing and manufacturing fees and pays 10-20% of each sale to the seller. | | | | | No shipping (all digital / drop shipped) | | |
| Folksy (UK) | Marketplace shop | no signup costs, but they do charge fees for listing items, plus a 6% commission. | | | | | | | |
| ArtFire | It allows you to link pre-existing stores to your marketplace | starts at \$4.95/month, with a \$0.23 listing fee and a 9% transaction fee. | It allows you to link pre-existing store and it can expand your reach. Not as much market saturation | | | | | | |
| Big Cartel | user-friendly eCommerce platform that includes website building (standalone site) | starts at \$9.99/month for twenty-five listings with zero sales commission | | | | | | | |
| The Nooks (CA) | | The cost of a membership is \$29/m, with no long term commitment needed. All sales go 100% to seller. | The first platform to offer a Partnership Paid Ads program. With this you can get up to \$100 of paid ads for your business. The Nooks will match your budget, up to \$100, and create and run online ads for you. Just submit your photos and we will take care of all the hard stuff | community of other makers | access to learning guides, helpful knowledge, and access to a community of Makers | | | | |
| Partial Gallery | | | | | | | | | |

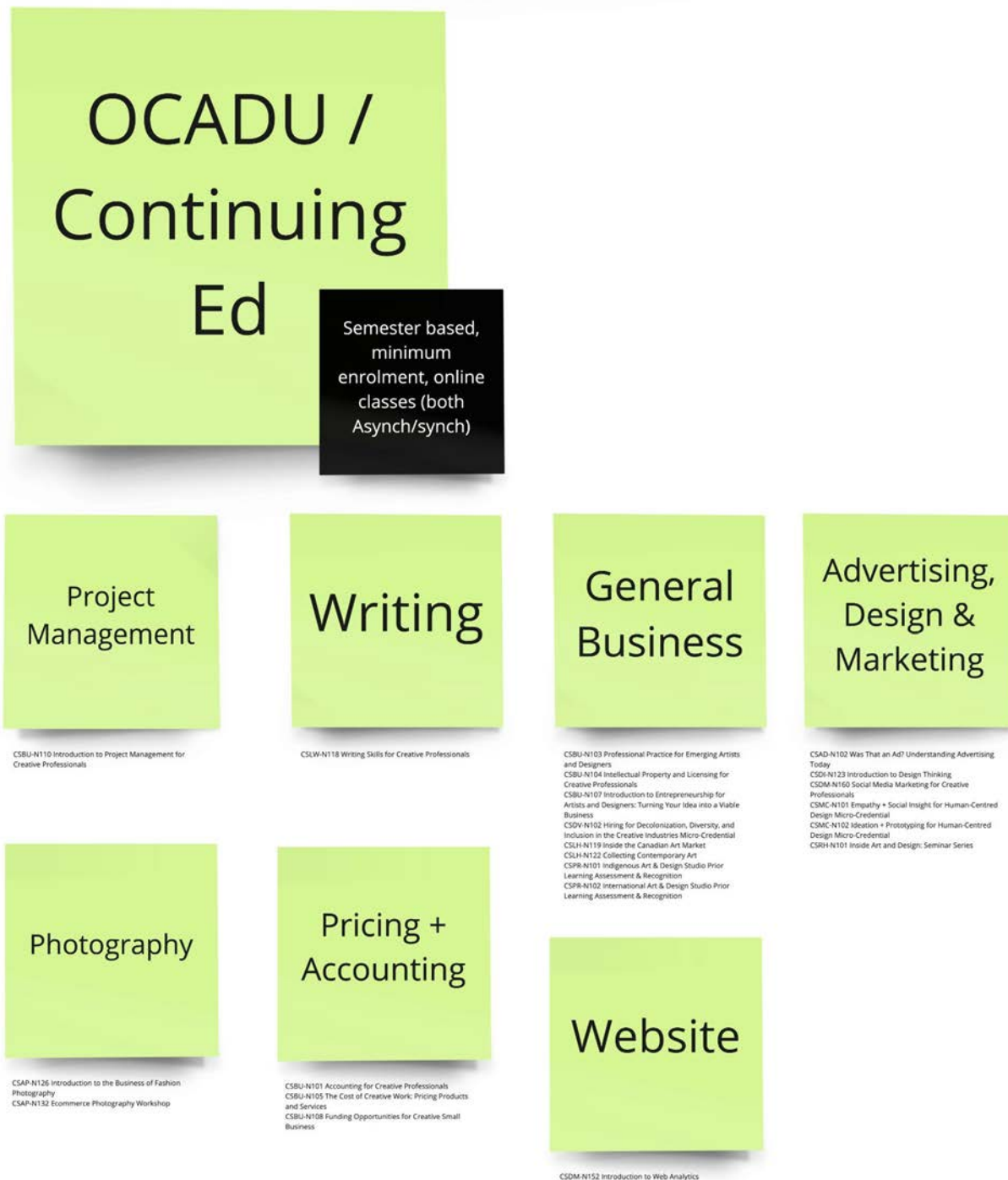
APPENDIX E

Competitive Analysis (High / Low)



APPENDIX E

Preliminary Learning Landscape (Continuing Studies)



APPENDIX F

Language Brainstorm

Words for how
they "sell"

Sell

monetize

Words for how
they "make"

craft
and
curate

create

make

design

produce

Titles for
someone "sells
their work"

Artist

Designer

Maker

Creator

Creative

Freelancer

seller

creative
entrepreneur

producers

founder

solopreneur

Contractor

Words for
"what they sell"

product

art

service

creative
goods

creative
wares

goods

creative
content

creative
work

Words for
their business

creative
business

microbusiness

shop

Freelance

Small
business

Studio