

One Giant Leap.

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**A Framework
for Growth:**

Mindset
Discovery
Strategy

X

**Salford Culture &
Place Partnership**

Introd — uction

Growth as a freelancer or smaller business begins long before onboarding clients, winning sales, or the profit. **It begins with you.**

This **3-part framework** will take you from **mindset** to **strategy** — giving you the tools to build the kind of growth that actually lasts.

Each section gives you space to explore who you are as a creative, who your customers are, and the scope of opportunity for your business.

Equipment

All you need is a piece of paper and a pen. The framework can be worked on at your own pace. Take the time to reflect on some of the themes and come back to them where needed.

The Format

Key concepts will be explained throughout, with dedicated tasks for you to do in each section.

Introd -uction

As a freelancer, solopreneur or small business you are managing the whole sales process. Within each section you'll gain clarity on **'why'** customers engage with your creative practise, and where to put your efforts so that you can grow your offer.

Mindset

Let's start with the foundations. You. In this first section you'll learn how to turn challenges into opportunities through adopting a growth mindset.

Discovery

In the next section we will deep dive into uncovering your values, style and motivations that underpin your creativity.

Strategy

We'll explore what motivates your customers to purchase your product or service.

Mind -set

A growth mindset is a belief that perseverance and learning doesn't just help you to adapt — it actively enables you to **create opportunities**.

Setbacks become stepping stones.

In this section you'll explore the differences between a growth and a fixed mindset. You'll learn how to build, scale and grow your offer using a growth mindset.

Change is inevitable. You'll learn why an approach to business requires a growth mindset.

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Growth Mindset

"In a growth mindset, challenges are exciting rather than threatening.

So rather than thinking, oh, I'm going to reveal my weaknesses, you say, wow, here's a chance to grow."

Carol Dweck

Growth Mindset

A growth mindset supports the belief that hard work, perseverance and a capacity to learn can lead to incremental growth, rather than a fixed belief that you're born with certain traits, skills and intelligence which ultimately lead to success.

A growth mindset supports:

Failure as an opportunity to grow.

Effort and attitude as a way to determine abilities rather than just talent alone.

Feedback as constructive, actionable and enabling learning.

Challenges as a vehicle for growth.

Fixed Mindset.

If a growth mindset is focused on resilience and adaptability, then a fixed mindset is the opposite. Ever heard someone say they're not good with numbers?

When you run a business or are a freelancer, you have to review budgets and assess cashflow – this requires a level of financial competency. A fixed mindset can be restrictive i.e. such tasks reserved for people who are good with numbers.

A fixed mindset supports:

Limiting beliefs such as failure being based on abilities i.e. you're either born with talent or not.

The underlying belief that abilities are unchanging.

Feedback and criticism are to be taken personally

There's a resistance to being challenged.

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Growth Mindset & Your Business

Think about a growth mindset like a muscle. When you learn new skills, are open to try new things and undergo self development, your ability to adapt, embrace challenges and take calculated risks strengthens.

When you are building your creative practice, a growth mindset can be applied practically to develop new income streams, iterate a current product or service, apply new tools to grow current income streams, and constantly manoeuvre based on product market fit.

Even when things don't go to plan, by adopting a growth mindset you can change course and try something new, creating opportunities in the process.

Growth Mindset Task.

A growth mindset frames setbacks as new opportunities. For freelancers and entrepreneurs adopting a growth mindset shapes how you handle difficult clients, projects which didn't go to plan, moments of self doubt, and the slow bit in between the next paid gig.

Get your pen and paper and reflect on the questions in the boxes.

Task. Identify a real setback from the past 6 months. Which mindset showed up in that moment? Use the questions as a prompt.

How did you respond?

What would you do differently?

What opportunity did it create?

Discovery.

As a freelancer, solopreneur or microbusiness, quite often you are regarded as the brand. This just doesn't just mean your logo, the name of your business, your website or your social media grid. It means you.

Your story, who you are and your secret sauce is your strongest asset. You are the commercial foundation of your business. And customers buy from people.

Before you sell anything, let's start with what makes you uniquely positioned to make, create and sell your offer.

Secret Sauce

A unique selling proposition or unique selling point can typically be defined as a differentiation in price, quality or convenience. For example selling luxury over a basic product.

However, any creative can compete on these selling points. What makes your creative practise or business unique is the style you bring, your story, the way you show up and ultimately who you are as a creative – **your secret sauce.**

Your vision gives customers an insight into your perspective and your view of the world.

You will be given three key areas to reflect on in this section, all of which make up your secret sauce:

**Visual
Story
Values**

Ultimately, your approach and who you are is what will win hearts and minds.

Discovery Task Part 1.

Visual.

As a creative your visual language, how you communicate through tone, colour, layering, perspective and the vision you bring to life through words, style, movement or animation all highlight feeling and story – ultimately your world. Think about your favourite creatives. Artists like Anish Kapoor are known for creating bold saturated sculptures, using reflective materials and optical illusions. Even if you don't work in sculpture, think about what you want your customer to feel after they have experienced your product or service – what does this mean for your colour palette and the way you express your ideas?

**Get your pen and paper and reflect on the questions in the boxes.
Complete the questions in order from left to right.**

Describe your visual, musical or literary language in five words or less. Think about the colours, textures, tones, themes shapes, or moods that consistently show up in your work.

If your work could have a soundtrack, what would it sound like?

Discovery Task Part 2.

Story.

The hero's journey arc is embedded into every great story we know and love – the Lion King, Lord of the Rings, the list is endless. The hero undertakes an epic voyage overcoming trials and tribulations, learning new skills and gaining clarity of who they are during the process. How you show up online, your personal brand and the branding of your creative business all come from a story. Your hero's journey.

Get your pen and paper. Complete the questions from left to right.

Tip. beyond these questions, how would you like to share your story? Perhaps you like using instagram or LinkedIn – are you comfortable sharing a video? Remember, people buy from people, and every great product is based on the foundations of any relationship – authenticity and trust.

**What challenge
have you
overcome?**

**What did you
learn?**

**What has it
showed you
about your
craft, skills and
talent?**

Discovery Task Part 3.

Values

Values underpin who we are, what’s important to us and how we approach both sales and marketing. Understanding your values is essential. Values shape how we attract the right type of customer, what work you take on, pricing and ultimately what fuels us. When customers come back or refer you, they are doing so because of who you are and what you stand for. And when you know what you value, and what work underpins that value – you have leverage.

Get your pen and paper and reflect on which 3 values represent you and your creative practice or business. What values are most meaningful to you? Think about your customer – what values do you want them to experience .You can use the values below as a prompt.

Authentici-ty	Belonging	Collabor-ation	Commit-ment	Commu-nity	Compa-ssion
Confid-ence	Conne-ction	Courage	Creativity	Curiosity	Dignity
Equality	Excellence	Freedom	Generos-ity	Growth	Honesty
Inclusion	Independe-nce	Integrity	Joy	Justice	Kindness
Legacy	Making a difference	Resilience	Self-expression	Trust	Unique-ness

Strategy.

Before you create a pitch, price your offer, or post on social media, you've got to know the reason why. Where you fit in the market, the size of the opportunity, and who your ideal customer is.

Doing this after you've created your offer leaves the sales to chance. Market research and understanding the bigger picture helps you to build with intentionality and a sense of clarity so you don't mismatch your offer with the wrong type of customers, or create an offer which misses out on that bigger picture.

In this section we will explore:

Who your ideal customer is

Your market

The bigger picture

You will create an ideal customer profile, undertake market research and create a strategy. Each task will be action orientated.

Customer Profile

A customer profile is also known as a buyer persona. It gives you the details about your customer, helping you to allocate your resources based on:

Who your customer is
What they care about
What's getting in their way

A customer profile helps you to gain clarity of your sales pipeline, marketing funnel and your offer. In your business you may have multiple customer profiles based on individual offerings.

Tip.

When developing your product or service, keep your customer at the centre. Every feature or attribute should directly address a barrier they face — not what you want to offer, but a problem that needs to be solved.

Customer Profile

Your customers can be grouped together based on shared characteristics and behaviours. A customer profile gives you a snapshot of a singular customer.

These data points can include:

Demographic

Demographic data tells us **who** is buying from us. This can include age, geographic i.e. location, gender, income, education and ethnicity.

Psychographic

Psychographic data tells us the reason **why** someone has made a purchase. This is also known as 'psychological traits' and can include interests, lifestyle, attitudes and values.

Pain Point

A pain point is a daily frustration your customer faces and can include their experience, functionality of a product or price, or a frustration not yet known i.e. you'll uncover through market research.

Tip.

There is often an intersection between demographics, psychographics and pain points.

Customer Profile Task.

A customer profile explores what compels a customer to buy from you based on their needs, who they are, what they do and the challenges they face. Remember, your solution i.e. your product or service, should either be focused on a problem a customer has or identify a problem a customer didn't even know they had.

Get your pen and paper and adapt the sections to build your own customer profile.

Task. Pick a customer or prospective customer. Take a look at the heading. If you don't know what pain point you're solving – can you ask a customer?

Customer Profile.

NAME

DEMOGRAPHIC

PSYCHOGRAPHIC

SECTOR

PAIN POINTS



Market Research

If you are starting something new or just getting clear on your current offer, learning if there's a market fit helps to validate your idea, identify a need, and who your prospective customer is.

By conducting market research you are assessing whether there is demand.

Market research is the process of analysing data through research to inform business decisions. This can be done by talking to customers and by also looking at the wider ecology, including a competitor analysis.

Tip.

Try to remove your own opinion when you conduct market research.

Remember, it's about learning if there's a market fit.

Market Research Task.

When you conduct market research, start with who your customer is and where you sit in the landscape. You'll then be able to target your offer based on need and positioning, rather than guess work. The following task is split into three sections. The first is a closer analysis of your business, the second part zooms out and looks at the overarching strategy. The white space.

Get your pen and paper and reflect on the questions in the boxes.

Tip. beyond this task, we recommend that you engage directly with your customers or target audience through surveys, polls, and conversations to help refine your 'why'. You may want to pose the questions below to them directly.

Your Customer

What problems do your customer struggle with, and how does your product or service address them?

Competitor Analysis

What are your competitors currently offering?

What are the gaps?

Pricing

What would your customers considers too cheap? And at what point is the price too expensive?

What is a strategy?

Ever heard of the planning trap? its where you start to build a long list of actions, tasks, a to do list – a plan.

Without a north star, those actions can build on the wrong idea, be individualistic in their output and veer you off track.

So what's the opposite?

A strategy is the reason that sits underneath your decision making. Its why you target a specific customer over someone else, its why you price at a particular level, where you show up and the landscape you choose to operate in.

Planning should come after strategy not before. Your actions should be driven by purpose, what the unmet need is that you are solving for your customer i.e. the white space, ultimately the purpose of your business and where you want to go.

Your Strategy.

The following task will help you to identify the 'white space'. This is the gap which isn't being served and is usually known as unmet need, giving you an insight into which areas you can expand, upsell and cross-sell into. Your offer should fulfil the unmet need within the market. Knowing this helps to solidify your solution including its benefits.

Get your pen and paper and reflect on the questions in the boxes.

Tip. knowing what your competitors aren't doing helps to strengthen what you are doing to service unmet need. For example, this could be where you deliver a workshop, whether its online or offline and the specific features that you offer.

How big is the opportunity?

What white space exists that only you can fill?

What are your competitors not doing?

Where do your customers actually show up?

How do you win and keep them?

End.

Congratulations on completing this **3-part framework.**

The next step is where the fun begins. You need to go out there and tell people about your offer.

Growth doesn't end here. In many ways, it just beginning.

You've got the foundations on paper. What now needs to happen is for you to experiment. Have a go. Win, fail and learn. That's where the learnings happen. And ultimately the growth.

You have to go out there, and have a go.

Mission Control.

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