

THE

Abundant Art Studio

CREATING A VIBRANT COMMUNITY SPACE
THAT INSPIRES AND CONNECTS



AMY FRANK



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

INTRODUCTION:

THE POWER OF CREATIVE COMMUNITY

4

FIRST STEPS:

GET SET FOR SUCCESS

6

YOUR DREAM SPACE:

A FEW CONSIDERATIONS

9

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

THE IMPORTANCE OF LA-LA-ERS

11

NUTS AND BOLTS:

MAKING YOUR STUDIO WORK FOR YOU

14

MORE IS MORE:

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME

16

TO MARKET TO MARKET:

UNIQUE WAYS TO ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

17

PARTING THOUGHTS:

PREPARE FOR AN ADVENTURE

INTRODUCTION:

The power of creative community



The concepts and advice in this e-book are for anyone hoping to create a collaborative creative space. While this effort has to be spearheaded by one person, I've been taught again and again that ***our power is in our community.***

Over the last seven years, I have been astounded at the dynamic, vibrant creative tribe of artists, instructors, and participants we have grown and the powerful, positive impact we have had on our town.

This e-book is dedicated to the eclectic, talented, and gracious artist instructors of The Makery of Central Pennsylvania. I hope it guides you in creating your own abundant art studio.

FIRST STEPS:

get set for success



There are a few important tasks to complete before you truly jump into the creation of your studio. While sometimes challenging for artistic types like us, finishing these administrative and financial to-dos will provide the legal and financial backbone of your business.*

1. Choose your business structure. Sole proprietorship LLCs are common financial structures for our type of company. They are designed to limit personal liability and provide some tax benefit as well. For more information on which type of financial structure is best for you, **click here.**

FIRST STEPS:

get set for success



2. Obtain insurance for your place of business. Again, not as fun as finding cool kid's art projects on Pinterest, but important none the less.

3. Create a basic business plan. This is important – but read the rest of this e-book first, as it contains important information about sources of income. We hope you'll want to include some of those in your plan!

4. Seek out your favorite local artists and artisans and tell them about your new studio.

Creating an active, engaged community is critical to the success of your maker space. More on this in Creative Partnerships.

***Note:** We leaned heavily on our local Small Business Development Center for help with these tasks, and recommend that you seek out a similar resource in your community. [Click here to find help in your town.](#)*

YOUR DREAM SPACE:

a few considerations



Your physical space is one of the most important decisions you will make in the creation of your studio. Below are a few points to think through as you seek out the perfect place.

1. There is no shame in starting small. We started The Makery in a tiny second floor storage space above a local boutique.

While *extremely* cozy, that space allowed us to learn, grow our audience and make mistakes with less financial consequence than we would have had with a large lease.

Many of the aspiring art studio owners we work with choose to start their business in their home, in a community space such as a church or civic center, or within an existing business such as a retail store with an extra room. This is a prudent choice and may give you the confidence and financial security you need when starting out.

YOUR DREAM SPACE:

a few considerations

2. Location, location, location. It is important to consider both your audience AND your competition when choosing your studio space.



a. Main Street: We believe in putting your studio where you WANT to be and in a spot that encourages other local businesses. Often, these locations have charming streetscapes, funky artsy spaces, and landlords hungry for retailers. Also, authentic, walkable storefront alone may be a draw for your audience. However, parking and traffic might be a concern.



b. Strip Mall: A multi-unit retail center often has convenient advantages such as parking and new(er) facilities. Keep in mind, as an independent art studio, you may be competing with larger chain stores that offer similar classes. In addition, strip malls traditionally lack the charm and vibrancy of a quirky downtown.



YOUR DREAM SPACE:

a few considerations

3. Think like Gumby. Gumby's motto is "fun and flexible". That's also a great phrase to keep in mind when choosing and outfitting your space.

a. Fun: To attract creatives and wannabe-creatives to your studio, you'll want it to be an inviting, intriguing, FUN space – a place your community feels lucky to work and play in. This means art, art supplies, and interesting visuals everywhere.

b. Flexible: To realize the greatest financial outcome, your studio space should be as flexible as possible. We joke that The Makery can convert from a pre-school birthday party to a swanky cocktail event in 20 minutes flat.

Our furniture is on wheels or can fold up and be stored away. This allows us to quickly re-arrange the space for maximum utilization. We get much of our furniture from **Ikea**.

Our Fave Furnishings:

- Tables and bookshelves on wheels
- Foam-core photos hung with fishing line
- String lights and garland
- Rolling carts for supplies
- Bed risers (to create bistro-height tables)
- Inexpensive hardware store drop cloths
- Lots of paint sinks
- Folding chairs and tables

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

the importance of La-La-ers



When we were planning The Makery, it was scary to think of bringing on others to help launch our concept into the community.

We quickly learned that the more community artists you can have “singing their song” in your studio, the better. Thus, we call ourselves “La-la-ers” and love the goofy, supportive tribe we’ve become.

The Makery would not exist without our fantastic cast of Resident Instructors. We now have 14 Resident Instructors teaching workshops, classes and events on everything from modern sewing to creative writing. These Resident Instructors are truly cooperative partners in the space.

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

the importance of La-La-ers

Each instructor pays monthly rent to The Makery depending on how often they teach (weekly or monthly). In exchange, they are offered a certain number of hours to teach in the space, publicity opportunities on our social media feeds, and other perks that come with a community studio.

This monthly rent pays a substantial part of our studio's facility fees and allows us to reach out to more of our community through each of our instructor's personal and professional networks.



Considerations when identifying instructors:

- Is this artist a local expert in their genre?
- Does this person share your concept of a community art studio?
- Would they be a good fit with your energy and vision for the space?
- Do you already have someone teaching this genre? We recommend only having one instructor per genre.
- Is this person honest and responsible?
- Do you LIKE this person?

NUTS AND BOLTS:

making your studio work for you



We use a few critically important tools to manage our registration process, scheduling and social media.

1. A Shared Google Calendar: All Resident Instructors schedule their classes on a shared google calendar.

2. Instructor-based Online Shopping Carts: All Resident Instructors create a shopping cart for their classes using Big Cartel. We then link to each instructor's BC site from our website's "Classes" page.

NUTS AND BOLTS:

making your studio work for you



Instructor-based Online Shopping Carts are beneficial for two reasons:

- a. Each instructor has complete control of how/when their classes are posted and registration information comes straight to them via email.
- b. Registration fees go directly into the Instructor's bank account.



This is clearly good for them and also saves tax complications and administrative headaches for the studio.



NUTS AND BOLTS:

making your studio work for you



3. Social Media Calendar: Each Resident Instructor receives time slots to post their classes within a 10-day cycle. We track this by creating a private, repeating event on our Google calendar indicating which instructor is up for that day.

This is a critical component of our success:

- Each instructor is control of their social media posts.
- Our social media is very active, varied and engaging.
- The Makery is not spending ALL the time it takes to maintain a vibrant social media portfolio.

MORE IS MORE:

additional income streams

To make your art studio financially abundant, it is helpful to think of other ways to bring income into the space.

While classes, workshops and parties are our primary business, we've also incorporated the following more passive income streams to increase our bottom line AND our outreach to our community.

1. A Retail Shop:

Our Makery Market sells locally-made art, jewelry and gifts, as well as some specialty art supplies.

2. Open Studio:

We open the studio to the public on Saturdays for an hourly fee.

This is an easy first step for community members who want to check out our space and provides revenue.



MORE IS MORE:

additional income streams



3. Event Rentals:

Our space is unique, and we noticed that local businesses and organizations were interested in renting it for special events.

Like Open Studio, this helps to build awareness of our studio and adds income.

4. Resident Artists:

During the weekdays – a lower-usage time for our studio, The Makery is home to several local artists.

They use the space as their own studio and pay an affordable monthly rent. This is another way to bring more art, creativity, and income into your space.

TO MARKET TO MARKET:

tips for engaging your community

Building awareness and energy around your art studio is important. However, we recommend using caution in choosing how to spend your marketing dollars and time.

Most traditional advertising such as print, radio, and TV, is very expensive and often misses your audience.

We've found the following outlets to be the most effective:

- 1. Social Media:** Facebook and Instagram are best for us!
- 2. Email Newsletters:** We use MailChimp for our e-newsletter and send about once a week.
- 3. Community Events:** Local fairs, festivals, and school functions are always looking for a kid's activity or engagement station. They are also a great way to spread the word about your studio.
- 4. Get CREATIVE!** Chalk drawing on sidewalks, funky flyers, postcards at local schools, coffee shops and other gathering places...anything that gets attention and is out-of-the-box is usually does the trick!



PARTING THOUGHTS:

prepare for an adventure



Creating a public creative space is a fascinating, fulfilling journey for both you AND your community. Here are a few final thoughts as you set off to build your own abundant art studio:

Prepare to open your mind, heart, and studio to local artists and creatives of all kinds. Watch how this willingness to let others "sing their song" grows your studio into something always new, fresh, and beautiful.

Prepare to watch your town transform as a result of your studio. The uniqueness, whimsy, and inspiration of your space will attract residents and, as a result, your space will bring energy and vibrance to the region.

Prepare for an adventure! The most amazing aspect of running a community art studio is continual surprise and delight. We are consistently amazed at what works (and what doesn't) at The Makery. Enjoy the highs and lows of launching your studio - and let us know if we can help!