

## MODULE 4: BRAND EXPERIENCE

When you're clear on who you are and why you do what you do, that community of "captivating common interest" begins to form. It's through the delivery of the brand experience that your resonant audience begins to shake out your Raving Fans. Consistency in delivering that experience is the linchpin that creates raving fans.

### **The Power of Consistency**

When you do something once, people might take notice, and they might just consider it a fluke. When you do something a few times, you start to develop a reputation. When you are known for doing something consistently, that's when trust increases rapidly.

As a kid, my mom would take us on mini-vacations all over the state. Being in Michigan, you're never more than 80 miles from one of the Great Lakes, which meant a lot of summer days were spent at one beach or another, and occasionally, we'd make the trek four hours to Mackinac and visit the island.

Invariably, we'd have to take a potty break somewhere along the drive. Most of the times, there were roadside rest areas, but when there were no rest areas to be found, mom's back-up plan was always McDonald's.

We rarely ever got to eat at McDonald's, which always made it felt more like she was teasing us. I remember asking on one of our stops why she stopped at McDonald's but wouldn't let us order anything. Her response was simple: "they always have clean bathrooms."

Well, they did, that is, until the day they didn't.

We were driving cross-country to the East coast. Somewhere in New York State, mom took a "pit stop" at the local McDonald's... and the bathrooms were atrocious.



She wouldn't stop at another McDonald's until we got back to Michigan. In her mind, the damage was done, and apparently she could only trust the McDonald's in our home state to have clean restrooms.

McDonald's never makes a claim in any of their marketing that they have clean restrooms. Sure, you might make the assumption that every establishment *should* have clean facilities, but we've all experienced a less than stellar bathroom experience. For Mom, clean bathrooms were part of her expectations. They were so consistently clean in Michigan, she expected *every* McDonald's to have clean restrooms.

*That is the power of consistency.*

So when you're crafting your customer experience, it's important to think about what you will and won't do on a consistent basis for your Raving Fans. You might not think it's a big deal, but to your Raving Fans, it could mean the world.

## **Be True To YOU**

This is the very reason I spend a lot of time at the beginning of any coaching relationship to understand exactly what matters to my clients. Some people need lots of alone time – which doesn't lend itself well to creating a business where you have to be in the public eye all the time. Other people can't stand too much alone time and need to be around others to stimulate their creativity.

When you're building your Noble Empire, you need to be considerate of what you will and won't do on a consistent basis. Otherwise, you'll be trading one soul-sucking career for another.

A colleague of mine was told time and again that she could improve her email response rates if she would drop the “plain text” emails and develop a fancy graphic-based email template. But she didn't want to go through the hassle of having to plug her content into a template every week. Instead, she wanted to be able to send an email from anywhere at any time of the day or not, and not have to deal with the complexities of a template. Plus she



wanted it to look a bit informal and approachable – like she was. So she kept her plain text email and kept working on developing her business in ways that worked for her.

Over time, as email technology got easier to handle, she added an image to each of her emails, but that's all that's really changed. No fancy templates or image-based headers. Just an invitation to her tens of thousands of subscribers to watch MarieTV every week. To that end, Marie Forleo has built a business and a brand around what mattered to her and how she chose to show up in the world.

## What's the look and feel of your brand?

It may sound silly to you if I asked “what does your brand taste like?” or “if your brand were an animal, what would it be?” And yet, these are not uncommon questions to ask in the branding process. While there's not enough time and space to develop your brand in this module, there are some things to keep in mind as you develop your customer experience. How do you and your business show up in the world? What would you never be caught dead doing?

## MacGyver vs. Sydney Bristow

I loved MacGyver. To me, he was trustworthy, reliable, and he had an unmistakable brand. He never used a gun (except once, in the very first episode of the show), he ate healthy food, and he had a mullet that every girl seemed to love. He wore jeans, drove a Jeep, and was never without a roll of duct tape. He used his brain to solve the problems of the world. On the rare occasions he put on a tux, he looked like a fish out of water – he even confessed that he *felt* like a fish out of water! He preferred his jeans and tennies, his Jeep, and his handy roll of duct tape.

In fact, you might say he was trustworthy and reliable *because* he had an unmistakable brand. You always knew what to expect with MacGyver.

I had the opposite reaction when I watched Alias. Sydney Bristow was hard to trust – even though I knew she was the hero of the



show. She was a double agent, always in and out of disguises. She was likable, but it was hard to know who she really was or which side she was serving. It took several seasons before I felt like I really knew what to expect from her.

### **What kind of character are you creating in your business?**

Whether you want to admit it or not you *are* a character. As a creative entrepreneur, you have to craft a persona – and I strongly encourage you to make it as true to life as possible. As Steve Jobs mellowed over the years, he stopped wearing business suits and became known for his iconic black mock turtleneck and jeans.

Lady Gaga insists on being outlandish in her own way. Even when she's dressed conservatively, she'll have a thick layer of glitter eye shadow and long, color-coordinated fingernails. They are the calling cards of her brand experience.

You need to decide *now* what you want to be known for – before someone else decides for you. There are countless tales of performing artists who are “made” into a persona by their agents and producers. Don't let that happen to you – even if you don't have an agent or a producer. I tell my clients all the time: you train people how to treat you based on what they've come to expect from you and what you've come to accept from them.



*You train people how to treat you based on what they've come to expect from you and what you've come to accept from them.*



Knowing what you want to be known for isn't just about your Great Work. Sure, it's important to deliver a quality product or service, but who is delivering it and how it's being delivered is just as important to the story of your business. Tiffany's could use any color box and command their lofty prices, couldn't they?

Well maybe not.

## Tiffany Blue

Tiffany's gift box has become synonymous with "excellence, exclusivity, and flawless craftsmanship" according to their own website. Founded in 1837, Tiffany & Young, as it was then known, started as a store for "stationery and fancy goods". Then, in 1845, Founder Charles Tiffany published the "blue book" - a catalog of their "exquisitely handcrafted jewels" that featured the distinctive blue shade on the cover. It's said that Tiffany selected the color because turquoise jewelry was a popular gift at the time.

Whatever the reason, Tiffany cultivated a marketing story equally attractive when they started using the color on their boxes and gift bags. It was the *one* thing you couldn't buy in the store. The box would be given gladly to you - free of charge - when you "bought a little something" to put inside it.



*"The rule of the establishment is ironclad, never to allow a box bearing the name of the firm, to be taken out of the building except with an article which has been sold by them and for which they are responsible."*

Eventually, the color became so synonymous with Tiffany that the company trademarked it – along with the box, the bow, and the



name, "Tiffany Blue Box<sup>®</sup>" When they filmed "Breakfast at Tiffany's" 40 armed guards were hired, not to protect the jewels so much as to ensure not a single box left the premises. They also filmed on a Sunday, which required Tiffany's to open on a special day just for filming.

Now, you may not need to go to these lengths for your own company, but if your brand is built on prestige, excellence, or luxury, these might be the minimum lengths you would go to position your brand in the marketplace.

This is why it is so critical to get clear on who you are and what really matters to you in the first place. Perhaps, like Tiffany's, you don't want to work on Sunday. That's an important boundary to set in your business. Maybe your Immutable Laws require you to be friendly and accessible – which means applying gold foil to your business cards is a bit "over the top" for your brand.

It's your business. You get to decide. And decide you must – before someone else does.

## Vision Check-Up

If you've been in business for a while, you may already have a vision for your company, now is a great time to review it and make sure it still fits you. Have you achieved your vision? Are you on track? Have things changed since you created it? If you've never created a vision, we'll do an exercise on the next pages to get you started. The idea is to start taking into account all the "little things" that make your reputation in the marketplace. Your reputation fuels your brand experience. Are you a high-end offering like Tiffany's? If so, there are certain expectations of luxury brands. How are you meeting them?

Or are you on the low-end of the marketplace, like Wal-Mart? You'll never see someone coveting a Wal-Mart shopping bag. It's not part of the brand experience. The stores use cheap plastic shopping bags, and most people re-use them to line their trash cans. But shopping bags aren't why people shop at Wal-Mart. The



Wal-Mart brand is built around being the lowest price in town. Friendly, when possible, but always the lowest price.

Give yourself a vision check-up and see where your company falls. If you've already created a vision and it's still relevant, how are you living up to it? Have things fallen through the cracks? Where do you need to get back on track?

The answers to the questions on the following pages may help. From there, you can craft a more powerful vision statement for your company. The resources below may also be useful if you're crafting a vision statement for the first time:

[20 Sample Vision Statements](#)

[Personal Vision Statements](#)

[A Copy-and-paste Starter Vision Statement](#)



## EXERCISE: VISION CHECK-UP

Similar to our "Testimonial Madlibs" exercise, use this fill-in-the-blanks worksheet to take a look at who you are and how you're showing up in your business.

I, \_\_\_\_\_(name) am a creative entrepreneur.

This is what I do:

This is why I do it:

This is how I want the world to see me:

To that end, this is how I want to serve my Raving Fans:





## Vision Check-up Continued

This is what my Raving Fans can expect me to consistently do:

This is what my Raving Fans can expect me to consistently be:

This is what I absolutely WILL NOT do to build my Noble Empire:

This is who I absolutely WILL NOT be to build my Noble Empire:

People who ask me to cross these lines are NOT my Raving Fans and have violated my Immutable Laws. As such, I will not take their critique or praise to heart when I plan my marketing activities.



*When you see what your vision holds, its easier to select marketing strategies that fit your brand. Where will you invest your time and energy marketing your Great Work?*



## Plan, Do, Evaluate

When my oldest child went to live in a wilderness camp for 25 months, he was taught a phrase that's become a valuable tool in my own business: plan, do, evaluate.

Simply put, you make a plan, you execute on that plan, and then you come back and evaluate what went well and what could have gone better. Then, you make a new plan, and get started on it.

So many entrepreneurs skip the "evaluate" phase and move right ahead into their next plan – often with disastrous results. Don't be that person.

Chaotic and Fusion creatives tend to skip the evaluation phase more frequently – although Fusions can sometimes get stuck in analysis paralysis when they do stop to evaluate. Linears usually have back-up plans for their back-up plans, and may even enjoy the analysis phase. Regardless of your type, however, it's important that you engage with all three steps.

The Raving Fans Toolkit is meant to help you plan your approach to developing a profitable, sustainable business doing what you love. It gives you space to explore what really matters so that the business you're building is actually the business you want to build. It lays out a foundation to help you make sure you stay in integrity with yourself and your vision for your Great Work – so you don't have to sell your soul to see success.

But you have to "do" the plan. You have to show up in your chosen marketplace and implement the strategies you've been developing. And you have to do it consistently.

Then you need to come back and evaluate what's working – and some things will work better for you than others. Maybe you tried one social media channel and it didn't click for you. That's okay, there are hundreds of channels available to try. Go try something else. Make a new plan, do it, and evaluate it. Rinse and repeat. Then you're on your way to having what I call a Noble Empire.



## The Five Tenets of a Noble Empire

A Noble Empire is, at the core, a transformational business or organization that seeks to serve and is highly rewarded (and highly regarded) for their service.

In our world today, empires are scorned, disdained, and generally maligned, because they are seen as greedy, despicable enterprises or political machines plotting to take over the world and leave us "Regular Joes" in utter despair.

In my heart, I believe it's possible to build something grand. Something focused on serving the masses not severing them. An enterprise that benefits not only the founder, but all who connect to it. It's a "symbiotic" relationship. It might be a little Pollyanna of me to think it exists, but I believe in it all the same. I call it the Noble Empire (as opposed to an "evil" one).

These are the five tenets of The Noble Empire

1. **The Noble Empire is founded on a higher calling.** I believe that each of us has a gift that we're put on this planet to share, through our Great Work, with the people that most need it. There is no one else on the planet more qualified to share your unique gift with the world than you. If you don't share it, who will?
2. **The Noble Empire is a holistic one.** There's a balance between work and play – and it doesn't look like the scales of justice. For most creatives, it looks more like spinning plates on a tightrope! I talk more about each of the Five Key Areas of Success on my blog and in my book, but the idea is to invest in each of these areas (Faith, Family, Fitness, Fortune, Freedom) on a daily basis. You can literally and figuratively die in any of these areas if you neglect them for too long.
3. **The Noble Empire is build by many, not by one person.** Yes, you're the founder, but your Raving Fans are the army of un-leaders, trailblazers, and believers that are faithful to you and your Great Work. It takes time, dedication, and commitment to build that kind of fierce loyalty, and the payoff is incredible. They'll take



a bullet for you... well maybe not a bullet, but they'll defend you, spread the word about you, and stand in line in the rain for hours to buy whatever you're selling. Without them, there is no empire.

4. **The Noble Empire is about service, not servitude.** There's a BIG difference between the two. No one is a slave in a Noble Empire – including you, mighty emperor! There's a “rising tide lifts all ships” kind of mentality that pervades a Noble Empire. Respect, mutual admiration, and a willingness to collaborate and learn are high on the list of values. This is not a one-sided relationship. We do for each other because we are all in it together (see Tenet #3).

5. **The Noble Empire is about connections.** Face it, no one can really get anywhere on their own for long. Someone somewhere has to collaborate, connect, or otherwise contrive to make something happen. Humans are not meant to be independent, but rather inter-dependent. Somethings we can handle on our own, but on the whole, we need each other at various points along the journey. Empires need allies, after all.

## CONGRATULATIONS! WHAT'S NEXT?

Congratulations on coming this far! It's not easy to do the “heart work” in business, but it's just as important as the “head work”. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your guide on this journey.

Now that you've got a plan in your hands, it's time to get crackin! Implement your next wave of marketing activities and watch what happens. Track your results. Evaluate those results then begin again. It's not sexy, but it works.

### Need a little help?

This Toolkit is an excerpt from my forthcoming book Creative Freedom. If you're on [my mailing list](#), you'll be the first to know when we launch. If you're ready to take this learning deeper, or you need some personal support in growing your Noble Empire,



there are different options available depending on your stage of business growth. If you're just getting started (or re-started) consider my [Creative Freedom Apprenticeship](#). If you're already established as a business owner and need ongoing accountability, then the [Accountability Club](#) may be exactly what you need. If you're already an established creative entrepreneur and want to explore working together in a one-on-one capacity, I have limited availability for [personal advising](#).

Regardless of how you proceed, please do proceed! Your business can only grow to the degree you're willing to show up consistently and share your Great Work with the world.

Your Raving Fans are waiting for you to show up, step up, and be their guiding light.

Shine on!



- Lisa

Lisa Robbin Young

Author, Advisor, Fusion Creative

LISAROBBINYOUNG.COM

P.S. If you enjoyed this excerpt from Creative Freedom, you might enjoy reading the entire book as part of our book launch team. [Contact me](#) and I'll be glad to send you more details!





## About Lisa

Known as "The Courage Catalyst," **Lisa Robbin Young** believes the best way for creative entrepreneurs to be successful is to be yourself - fully and completely, and define success on your own terms.

With more than 20 years as both a performing artist and entrepreneur, Lisa has helped hundreds of clients make more money, have more impact – and more fun – doing what they love. Lisa's mission is to help you Noble Empire and live an inspired life – without selling your soul.

An award-winning author and composer, Lisa has three albums to her credit, including [\*The Fine Line\*](#), a collection of pop-infused jazz and blues tunes. When she is not coaching clients, Lisa is currently working on a project to record 300 songs. She is also the author of the international best-selling book, [\*The Secret Watch\*](#), a success parable written specifically for entrepreneurs.



*This is the final module in a four-module training series. If someone shared this with you, you can get free access to the entire series at [lisarobbinyoung.com/gift](http://lisarobbinyoung.com/gift)*

