

6 lessons from a full-fledged creative director

Even if you work smart, you still have to work hard and devote yourself to it to succeed.

Piera Gelardi is the founder and creative director of **Refinery29** - an online lifestyle and fashion magazine with 25 million readers worldwide.

When starting the company in 2005, Piera's application only included an internship certificate (accompanied by a college childcare contract). She joked that she was no different from a student with no working experience but the fact is, this admirable businesswoman has been devoting her life to the creative field.

1. 20 beautiful words to help you regain your beliefs and motivation

During 11 years since the start of her business idea, Piera has made Refinery29 from a company with only 4 employees to become a large-scale enterprise with 400 people and the full time of ups and downs Helping her accumulate valuable lessons in both work and life.



Here are 5 valuable tips that Piera shared in a talk on NTMY Show for young people:

1. Work hard, not just smart

"My motto is" to always move forward "and put effort into work. Participate in an unfinished task, continue to contribute to it to really improve and develop."

Piera said that family is a great source of motivation. As an adult, she witnessed her parents working non-stop to both develop their careers and fulfill their personal goals and they conveyed that value to her so that she could have more inspiration to continue to improve herself. I'm like your parents tried.

"I really hate how to say" work smart, not hard "because in my opinion, you really have to work hard, even if you put your energy into it, you can achieve what you want. You have to work hard every day, otherwise, you can't accomplish anything. "



Admittedly, working smart will help us save time, resources as well as effort but no way, you don't have to focus on it and still accomplish the task. Don't look down on hard work if you want to succeed in your career. Really do it and do the best you can.

2. Don't be too serious about brainstorm

Piera shared that her previous work has taught her the importance of smiles and humor in the brainstorm process.

"We will have the" crazy ", stupidest ideas, laugh at them because of them and then, feel great to have come up with something interesting , " she said. *"I used to do that. When I had to put up an idea [at Refinery29], I often made people excited. I tried to give" nonsense "ideas first, they felt good when I did. I think that being open is a creative way to get ideas and connect different things together. "* Not always what you need is in a straight line and waiting for you to reconnect. You must search for factors that lie out of that trajectory.



Brainstorm sessions are often where good ideas are destroyed. Especially the seemingly bizarre opinions, "crazy" are quickly ignored by the people around. However, maintaining a little "silly" line of thought during the brainstorm meetings is very interesting. It will help you get the first and certain ideas, the team members will recognize their value.

3. Work with people who are not like you

Before building Refinery29, Piera and some friends opened a magazine publishing company. However, this idea quickly failed because all project participants had the same background and skills. No one is different.

"It's not a complete collapse, but I have learned a lot from that failure. One of the biggest lessons is when you start doing something, work with people who have other skills. very necessary ". More precisely, your team must have both diversity and experience.

People with different personalities or skills will bring new experiences and perspectives in meetings. Hiring a person like you will usually not be beneficial, instead of hiring someone different and even smarter than you.

4. The customer will tell you what you need to do

"One of the biggest reasons for our growth and success is that the Team always listens to the audience." Piera said. "So, in terms of content, it is the basis for us to make reasonable changes and developments. Observe what users find interesting and looking for."

When Piera and its founders built Refinery29, they created content suitable for both men and women, focusing on independent shopkeepers and designers. However, everything has changed.



"When we started to see that most readers were mostly female, we decided to focus on that customer segment to grow. Therefore, most of the content is directed at them."

Listening to customers does not mean your vision is shaken. Refinery29 remains loyal to independent fashion and maintains a certain connection to a significant number of male readers, however, *"focusing on the main customer base will help you grow faster. half"*.

5. It's okay if you want to give up sometimes

Piera shared this in an Instagram post. She felt anxious about her work and admitted that during that time, she thought about giving up every day. It was a very negative thought and the impact on Piera was not small.

"That fear opened up many things. It helped me connect with many people in a very interesting way. And when I told the whole team about this time, many people also began to share sincerely about Unexpectedly, it has created very positive effects and we understand each other better. "

Being hurt, feeling broken is very scary, but it will help you grow and create opportunities for others who are also in the same situation as you to escape from that "negative circle".

6. You don't always need a plan

There is always a difference between a perfect plan and a level of confidence in your ability. Planning can fail but quick adaptation is what will help you get the most solid success.

"I never had a perfect plan , " Piera said, "I did it carefully and in an integrated order".

She never expected Refinery29 to be brilliantly successful, but she knew she had something to keep it moving forward.

"I believe in intuition. I think I can close my eyes and still walk in the direction I want as if I have a compass in my body. However, I have no such thing as a perfect plan, never".

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