

# Creative Canvas

An Idea Exploration and Planning Tool for Creative Projects

Developed by Terri Lonier, PhD | CEO, Make International | Chicago, IL

Project Title:

Date/Version:

Project Description:

Project Owner(s):

Timeframe:

Partnerships and Network 	Key Activities 	Value Proposition 	Champions and Coaches 	Audience 
	Equipment, Materials and Resources 		Channels 	
Expenses and Investments 		Revenue and Rewards 		
Outcome Vision 				

Next Action Steps



1.

2.

3.



Accountability Partners:

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# Do you have a creative project you want to bring to life?

Meet the Creative Canvas.

Developed by  
**Terri Lonier, PhD**  
CEO, Make International  
Chicago, IL

## What is the Creative Canvas?

The Creative Canvas is an idea exploration and planning tool for creative projects. Like an artist's canvas, it is a place to turn your creative inspiration into reality and share it with a wider audience.

## What inspired it?

The Creative Canvas — an adaptation of Alexander Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas (BMC) — is designed for individuals working in creative disciplines. The original BMC, developed in 2008 with a global crowdsourced collective of 470 practitioners, is an entrepreneurial management template that helps both novice and seasoned entrepreneurs understand the key components of startup and growth. The BMC has been central to the success of thousands of entrepreneurial ventures around the world, and you can find copies of the BMC on walls, whiteboards, and in presentations at startups, nonprofits, and Fortune 100 global companies.

## Designed for Creatives

Dr. Terri Lonier has been using the Business Model Canvas since its earliest days with individuals and organizations in a wide range of disciplines. Her background in the arts, and her training with BMC founder Alex Osterwalder, led her to realize that the tool could be adapted for artists, designers, and other creative professionals.

## Preparing to Use the Creative Canvas

 **1. Download the Creative Canvas PDF** at [creativecanvas.org](http://creativecanvas.org) and print out one or more copies. The file can be printed at any size, although 11x17 inches (tabloid) is a popular option. It allows lots of room to explore your ideas yet can be folded to tuck inside a notebook or file folder.

 **2. Gather a collection of colored pens, pencils, markers, or Post-It Notes.** While you can write directly on the Canvas, many like to use small Post-It Notes because they can be changed easily. Feel free to use words, drawings, charts, diagrams or whatever else inspires you.

 **3. Find some room to spread out in a quiet area.** Bring along any notes or other materials you need to chart out your creative project.

## Completing the Canvas

The Creative Canvas has 14 sections: ten boxes in a central work area, along with other sections that provide context for your project idea and action plans. The guide at right will help you complete each section.

**NOTE: You do not need to complete the Creative Canvas in any specific order. However, the following approach is often a good place to begin, since it helps you smoothly think through your ideas.**

## Let's Begin.

### 1. Title, Date, Owners, Timeframe

Fill in this top area with the name of your project, the date you are starting this Creative Canvas, which version it is (default to v1.0, if you're just starting out), the name(s) of the individual(s) who are involved, and the desired timeframe to complete the project.

### 2. Brief Project Description

In eight words or less, describe your project. You will likely revise this many times as you develop your idea, and it will be the phrase you repeat endlessly to answer the question: "What are you working on?" Choose each word with care to communicate your idea most clearly.

**The next 10 boxes are the main work area of the Creative Canvas. Use the questions below to prompt your thinking.**

### 3. Value Proposition

What value does your creative project bring to the world? What makes it special and/or distinctive? Why will others be interested in it?

### 4. Audience

Who is your audience for this project? Why are they interested? Why do they care? Who do you want to influence? Who will pay or compensate you?

**Note: You may have multiple audiences for your project. Consider using a different color of pencil/ink for each audience, or write them on different colors of Post-It Notes.**

### 5. Channels

How will you find and connect with your audience(s)? How will they "buy" your creative product, service, or experience?

### 6. Equipment, Materials, and Resources

List the resources you will need for your project. Consider:

- Equipment
- Space
- People
- Technology
- Intellectual Property (IP): copyrights, trademarks, patents, etc.
- Financial Support
- Other

### 7. Key Activities

What are the most important activities needed to make this project happen? What must be done on a regular basis? Will you need to develop new skills or capabilities for this project? If so, what are they?

### 8. Partnerships and Network

Who are the partners and members of your network who can help you make this project happen? What will they bring to the project?

### 9. Champions and Coaches

Who can serve as your guide(s) and champion(s) for this project? What will you ask of them?

### 10. Expenses and Investments

What expenses and investments are needed for this project? Which costs are a one-time expense or investment? Which are recurring (e.g., monthly)?

### 11. Revenue and Rewards

What are the rewards of doing this project? What are the potential sources of revenue? How much? One time or recurring?

### 12. Outcome Vision

It all comes together here. What does success look like when this project is done? What results are you hoping to achieve? Be specific.

### 13. Next Action Steps

Write the next three action steps you will take to move your project forward. List them here, along with a deadline for completion.

### 14. Accountability Partners

Create an Accountability Team and check in with them on a regular basis (e.g., every two weeks) to stay on track.

## Congratulations!

**You have finished your Creative Canvas, and your creative project is closer to becoming reality.**

To increase your chances of success, here are a few more tips:

- Keep your Creative Canvas where you can refer to it often. Review it regularly so it stays fresh in your mind.
- As your ideas develop, complete new versions of your Creative Canvas. Date and give a new version number to each iteration to track your progress over time.
- If you have multiple projects you would like to complete, make a Creative Canvas for each one.