

What Creative Industries Have to Offer to Business? Creative Partnerships and Mutual Benefits

A. Smagina, and A. Lindemanis

Abstract—In the time of globalisation, growing uncertainty, ambiguity and change, traditional way of doing business are no longer sufficient and it is important to consider non-conventional methods and approaches to release creativity and facilitate innovation and growth. Thus, creative industries, as a natural source of creativity and innovation, draw particular attention. This paper explores feasibility of building creative partnerships between creative industries and business and brings attention to mutual benefits derived from such partnerships.

Design/approach - This paper is a theoretical exploration of projects, practices and research findings addressing collaboration between creative industries and business. Thus, it concerns creative industries, arts, business and its representatives in order to define requirements for creative partnerships to work and succeed.

Findings – Current practices in engaging into arts-business partnerships are still very few, although most of creative partnerships proved to be highly valuable and mutually beneficial. Certain conditions shall be provided in order to benefit from arts-business creative synergy.

Originality/value- By integrating different sources of literature, this article provides a base for conducting empirical research in several dimensions within arts-business partnerships.

Keywords—Arts, artists, business, creative industries, partnership.

I. INTRODUCTION

IN the time of increasing global connectedness, growing uncertainty, ambiguity and chaos, traditional way of doing business is no longer sufficient [1], it is important to consider quality characteristics, like ability to use creativity and innovation for development and grow, as well as to be sensitive to the emerging trends in the society and be able to adapt in time [2]. Increasing focus on innovation in business includes new approaches towards business operations and its aesthetic components in recent years gave rise to the interest in the knowledge and methods, which are used in the creative industries. Though creative industries can be considered as part of the business economy, they are distinguished from business sector by the products and services they offer. It is in creative industries there in the result of the creative process highly original and unique products and processes are being created [3]. Thus, in order to facilitate development, growth, change and transformation, businesses shall not miss on opportunities to learn from creative industries and its creative

workers-Artists. Even though, Arts and Artists have a very different from business professionals “creative identity” and there are cultural biases against engaging Artists in the companies, projects undertaken by many different companies proved to bring a lot of mutual benefits as for business as for Arts sector [4]. However, in order to facilitate collaboration between 2 different worlds, parties have to mutually engage into collaboration and respect each other. This article is a theoretical exploration of the creative potential of the creative industries, its importance and impact on the wider economy as well as relationships between broadly defined terms Arts and Business in order to find out if successful collaboration is possible and what benefits it brings. Factors influencing success of creative partnerships are explored and defined.

II. CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Due to the growing importance to the economies of countries, creative industries draw particular attention. However, creative industries are not only considered as a source of potential benefits for the economy [5], they also influence society by affecting social and cultural aspects of the peoples’ life. Generous corporate contributions to creative industries provide for opportunity to people to derive pleasure from having exposure to works of arts which may not be possible otherwise, whereby allowing for Arts to improve quality of life, bring happiness as well as develop well rounded people and employees [6].

Despite some criticism concerning definition of the creative industries, the most widely accepted is one set by UK DCMS [7] “creative industries are industries formed from companies established out of the individual creativity, skill and talent and this creativity shall be given chance to flourish for the benefit of the society and economy” [8].

The structure of the creative industries evolved with time and different countries have made their adjustments concerning the sectors included in creative industries. For example, UK definition does not mention cultural content, meanwhile in most European countries definitions tends to provide higher input of the cultural content of creative production [9]. Best-known concept of creative industries described by DCMS [7] includes cultural industries (crafts, dance, music, etc.) and creative arts; together they produce creative products (performing arts, visual arts, film, music, etc.) and creative services (architecture, publishing, software services, etc.). A new model offered by Work Foundation [10], based on Throsby’s concentric model (Fig.1.), illustrate interrelations between economy, creative industries, the Arts and the classical cultural industries. Though, for the purposes of this article term creative industries is used to describe that

ASmagina is with the Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration, Latvia, Riga (phone: 00371 29650432; e-mail: anzelika.smagina@riseba.lv).

A. Lindemanis is with Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration, Latvia, Riga (phone: 00371 67807962; e-mail: arturs.lindemanis@riseba.lv).

part of the macro economy which broadly describes its “creative” part and incorporates the Arts, Artists and other creative talents as its participants, which are of particular interest for this article.

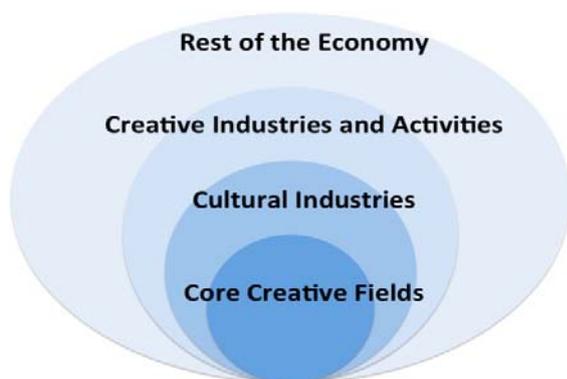


Fig. 1 Throsby concentric circles model [10]

Thus, creative industries are a very important sector for the economy and it has many different subsets, including cultural industries. This article has a focus on the generally defined term Arts, which includes creative output of the creative industries and its creative workers -Artists, who are, according to the definitions of Hutter and Throsby [11], the individuals whose occupation involves a significant input of creativity.

III. ARTISTIC COMPETENCES

In this new global economy, businesses have a lot to learn from Arts and Artists. It was back in the past when Artists were among the first to realise the importance of the international trade and were able to adapt to the new requirements set by the changed environment. Arts products were among the first goods to be traded across the borders and, consequently, rapid shift towards globalization made Artists to take this challenge and develop new approaches, concepts and ideas [12]. Thus, appreciating Artists abilities to see ahead of time and notice important emerging trends in the environment can help businesses to better read the environment and take solid, proactive decisions.

Landry [13] supports the above by saying that entrepreneurs shall learn from Artists how to use artistic competences to create new ways of achieving business goals. Combining right-brain imagination of Artists with left-brain logic and analysis of business people increases the capacity for breakthrough ideas and insights that lead to success.

Artists are also said to be “third generation innovation” [14] as because of the artistic education and training they possess very well developed skills of critical thinking, observation and comprehension of consumer needs. Their desire to experiment and reflect allows them to make sense of radically ambiguous and uncertain situations and progress beyond the borders. These skills are usually refereed as artistic creativity, and those are important for innovation. Lester and Piore [14] claim that “ambiguity is the critical resource out of which new ideas emerge” as it encourage discussion which leads to new ideas.

Several studies tested the link between art education and

critical thinking of artists [15], and discovered that people with high arts exposure show a greater understanding of “multiple or alternative vantage points” [16]. That allows Artists, working in business fields, to search for creative solutions across organizational and field boundaries and transfer the expertise where it is required. In the innovation literature artists are called “boundary spanners” [17] or ‘interpretive innovators” [14] as their preferred work methods are interpretive as opposed to analytical, which is more common for business people. Similarly, attitudes to uncertainty [18] and tolerance of ambiguity appear to be essential to the interpretive mode of innovation, whereas a more analytical approach would proceed by reducing ambiguity and uncertainty.

As Schumpeter’s [19] defines “creativity” as idea generation and “innovation” as a process of implementing these creative ideas, Artists could be considered as “the inventors” and the entrepreneurs are the ones “who gets things done” [19]. The latter would mean that Entrepreneurs and Artists could work together to complement each other in order to create added value. In addition, Artists would allow businesses to realize the influence of aesthetics, need for change, and emotional aspects, which are generally overlooked in the workplaces. [20],[21].

IV. CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Nowadays, many companies have connections with Arts organizations and individual Artists; however these activities mostly remain occasional and do not allow for full range of benefits, which can be derived from more solid and 2-ways interactive Arts-Business relationships. Although, collaborative ways of working can help both sides to reveal their hidden potential and facilitate growth and development [22].

Arts and Business relationships can take many different forms – starting from occasional sponsoring and developing into long-term collaboration, depending on the goals set by organizations. Examples of small projects are limited to engaging just one Artist, although other examples can show permanent collaboration with Artists and Arts organizations. McNicholas [23], characterized a synergy between Arts and business as a new type of strategic partnership which is based on different types of arts funding relationships – starting from simple donations and evolving into partnerships. On the very basic level, business would just donate to Arts organizations, without real engagement into the process. Although, the highest level of Arts funding, would result in much deeper integration of Arts support, and consequently, better impact on the corporate image. In his approach, author, reflected on different levels of sponsoring the Arts, encouraging thoughts and discussions about other forms of interactions with creative sectors of the economy, hence building the platform for deriving benefits from mutually involved and mutually affecting relationships between Arts and Business [24].

Enriched by the authors of this article, McNicholas’ [24] model illustrates possible mutual engagement of the business and Arts organizations. Engagement starts with occasional

events in collaboration with Arts organizations or single Artists and develops into long-term mutually beneficial collaboration (Fig.2).

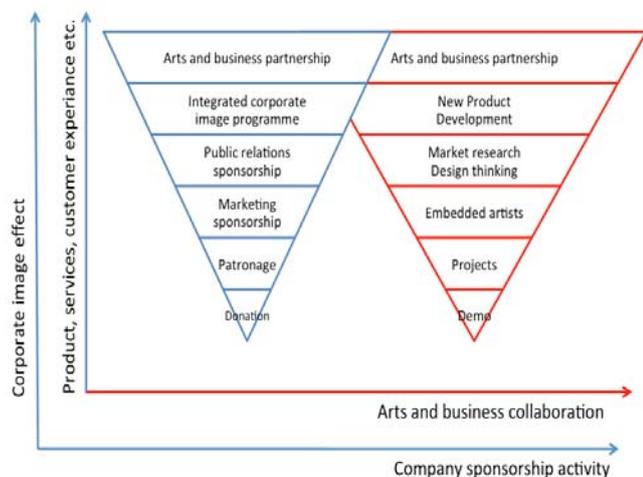


Fig. 2 Arts and Business partnership. Adopted by authors [24]

V. ARTISTS VERSUS BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

It is assumed [20] that Arts can be a role model for business, because it pushes the boundaries beyond the traditional forms. Thus, it can teach business to operate between “Knowing” and “Not Knowing”, find solutions in situations full of ambiguity and chaos and help to release creative energy for innovation. Also, Schein [25] points out that, entrepreneurs shall employ non-traditional thinking and acting, thus, engaging Artists and other creative talents into process of creating business value could be the perfect solution [26] since artists usually demonstrate higher willingness to take risks or risky changes of direction and they are constantly seeking novelty and change [27]. Although, it is sometimes characterized as irrational “determination” or “bloody madness” [28], this constitutes a key part of the innovative identity of the Artists.

Artists are different from business people and they also have different opinion on what is important for them. It also concerns the main drive of business – making money- what is not important for Artists. Passion and beauty give hem energy and desire to move forward. They are naturally curious and inquisitive. That constitutes a problem for business owners, who hesitate to engage Artists into companies. In addition, Artists unrealistic expectations and sometimes difficulties in clearly communicating just what those expectations are might give rise to misunderstandings and consequent problems. Though, if these differences are mutually accepted and used properly, exactly these “artistic” competences could help entrepreneurs to open new horizons and create new value for their companies [29].

Unfortunately, even though numerous arts-based projects proved to be successful, still very few business leaders would look to the artistic sphere as a means to engage on long-time basis because of the cultural biases against Artists.

Despite the accepted fact that artists possess unique “creative” competences and their “special” way to see the

world and engage in business, the most common perception about them is still that they are “not logical” and usually are considered as a “poor performers in business” [30].

But, in their artworks Artists inspire other individuals, they make dreams come true. They convey complicate feelings and show new directions to people. They change people’s minds. In collaboration with Artists, by contacting contradictory things and cultures, people can discover their unfulfilled potential. Art takes away barriers between people; it transcends gender, colour of skin, race, age, disabilities, social status, etc. [31]. Exactly these “creative talents”, whose talent is not fully employed in the existing economy [32], are the perfect candidates to provide for creative solutions to facilitate creativity, innovation and change and transform companies.

VI. SUCCESS FACTORS FOR CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Therefore, there is a need for the worlds of arts and business to form relationships, different from the traditional forms of entertainment and sponsorship.

There is an exploratory evidence from projects largely undertaken by major corporations like Unilever, American Express, BBC, British Airways, Coca-Cola, Ericsson, IBM, Kodak, Lever Faberge etc., that partnerships with artists can serve as catalyst and facilitator of change and transformation, as well as to provide for creative insights and outcomes which contribute to development and growth of the companies.

But for tall mentioned benefits to surface, it takes hard work, because creative processes are unpredictable, involve risks and the contact between artists and business people is not always simple. People with different backgrounds, cultures, expertise and experience must accept each other and find ways how to work together.

To form a long-term perspective and solid grounds for future collaboration between arts and business it is imperative that parties take each other seriously and bring their assets together. According to [33], mutual engagement is imperative for effective collaboration and it expands beyond routine tasks or interactions. For example, product design or problem solving requires much high levels of mutual engagement, than ordinary financial transactions.

In order to ensure success of the collaborative projects between Arts and Business, both sides have to cooperate: business should create an environment, organizational setting which allows for enhancing the creative capabilities of the Artists - so that business and Arts can interact; arts organizations shall take into consideration business needs, and not only follow their own need for artistic expression, consequently, Artists shall try to integrate into organization, although without sacrificing on their creative capabilities [34].

On the result of the arts-based projects run by several organizations, it has been noticed, that for the more beneficial outcomes, it is better to actively engage artists with the workforce, rather than organizing workshops where workers would be passively learning about new methods [35]. In addition, due to the specific competencies of the artists, they shall be allocated roles, which suit their competencies best and not be employed for pure business functions. Their roles could

include ones which are involved with aesthetics or emotional side of the product design, working environment or, for example, they could be used for solving conflicts or improving relations with customers [36]. Nevertheless, in order to maintain the necessary distance and be able to introduce new perspectives, the artists chosen for collaborative projects must possess strong artistic integrity and have a strong ability to listen to people and act accordingly [37].

B. McNicolas [24] has identified several key factors, which facilitate success of the Arts, culture and business relationships and partnerships:

Strategic matching of core value: target audience, synergy of goals and mission;

Relationships: 2-way communication, interaction, common vision;

Longevity of commitment: building relations for long-time requires sincerity, authenticity and security;

Creativity and customization in terms of approach;

Management sensitivity and commitment towards each other;

Customization of the engagement – individualization or personalization of the tailor-made deals.

Also, on the basis of the project run by Arts & Business [34], several factors have been identified as having big impact on the success of the creative collaborations. Those factors are:

Commitment of all stakeholders;

Matching of the objectives of stakeholders of both sides;

Well-planned project steps with enough time given for adjustments;

Resources allocated for supporting good collaboration relationships;

Open communication, inclusive all stakeholders;

Well-documented track of activity and results records.

Fulfilment of the above mentioned requirements would lead to more mutually successful and beneficial partnerships and long-term collaboration

Arts & Business [34] confirms that Businesses are increasingly using creative partnerships in order to release creativity and innovative content so that introducing new products and discover new consumers and audiences. Thus, open collaborative partnerships help companies to optimise their recourses in terms of costs and efficiency. Research undertaken by MacCormack [39] discovered that companies, which use partnerships for innovations reduced their R&D costs by between 10-30%.

VII. BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships may take different forms, vary greatly in time and work on different levels of the organization. In terms of forms, it can work as a means of changing working environment, new work place design, entertainment; for facilitating better engagement of employees in the work place, personal development, leadership and communication trainings as well as integrating Arts into strategic planning processes, marketing and service management [40].

In terms of levels, according to Tillteurope [41] Arts can influence workers on the first, individual level (development of creativity and innovation, raising self-esteem, motivation, even reduction of absenteeism because of illness), second, change and facilitate better interpersonal level (communication between individuals, dissimilar and diverse groups, creation of shared space and community, etc.), and, third, the most advance level is organizational one – where engagement of Arts, by providing dipper inquiry into business issues and encouraging creative solutions and introducing of new products and services can facilitate rapid development and growth, change and transformation of the organization as well as to improve corporate image and reputation of the company.

In addition to the overall positive effect on the whole organization, one of the biggest areas in which Arts can help business is individual employee level. Because companies are managed by people, it is important that arts can help them embrace creativity, open their minds and discover distinctive features of their language, personal values and habits [42]. Thereby, people get an opportunity to generate variations in ways of working and living so that they provide for future options to rely on.

All in general, Arts provides many insights into the human condition, behaviour, winning, losing and competitiveness [34].

It can improve group dynamics, motivation, and loyalty; encourage more efficient communication and provision of the constructive feedback.

The results of using arts-based learning and training, for example, in The McGraw-Hill Companies helped to change employees' attitudes by letting employees confront their assumptions in a non-traditional and non-intimidating environment and, proved to be very positive as a part of an overall strategy of the organization to help release creativity [43].

Although, creativity is not perceived as only the competence possessed by artists, there is still a difference between creativity in Arts sector and business. Ambile [44] defines creativity as a process of creative thinking which determines how people think, react, solve problems and combine their knowledge with new ideas and these ways are very different in Arts sector in comparison to business. Thus, learning from artistic sphere would provide business with non-conventional methods in releasing creative energy of its employees thereby leading to creating more inspirational, enjoyable, and consequently more effective and productive work setting [41].

For the arts organisations having unique working environment is a natural thing and they also occupy distinct niches they work in. For business organizations this provides for new market opportunities, market segments as well as for creation of a new product design. Among other benefits is that arts organisations can also help provide for corporate hospitality, additional promotional activities and, the most important, - to enhance image of the organization. Positive

publicity is another positive aspect of collaborations of business with Arts.

Nevertheless, it is not only business side, which benefits a lot. Arts organizations and Artists have a lot to receive as well.

Interactions with business people bring “commercial” flavour into Arts organization, thus, Artists status-quo gets shaken and they are forced to think and act accordingly. Thereby, they gain deeper insight into business operations and learn many new business skills, which they could use in the future. During the collaborative projects engaged Artists better understand their own professional potential and what they are capable for.

Business organizations can help Artists to establish closer links with the market and provide Artists with an opportunity to balance market expectations with those of their artistic intentions [34].

As artists are believed, to create products for themselves or for the sake of Arts, which does not always go in hand with market demands and customers expectations, and often lack business strategies, collaboration with business organizations can help them build new strategies, secure new revenue streams and improve efficiency thereby helping artists gain better independence and develop in right direction.

According to the survey run among the graduates of Arts schools [28] working in different sectors of the economy allows them to gain unique experiences to be latter used in their creative carriers. Commercial sector allows for “understanding of artistic and professional conventions”, broader visibility and networking opportunities that positively impact on practice and deliver higher rates of return. Non-commercial sector facilitates their development in terms of aesthetic and emotional satisfaction, as well as provides for possibility to explore and collaborate with different people. Community sector permits artists to establish a positive community life and enhance their cultural identity. In addition, survey revealed that artists appreciate creating works which are seen and appreciated by wider society - kind of “public” arts, not “private”. By doing so, they receive immediate feedback, which gives them possibility to look at their work with the eyes of other people. Artists indicated that working for business sector expands their network and allows for bigger market for their creative offers and, in addition, they are getting inspired from outside the arts world.

Nevertheless, the biggest benefit for the creative talents to work for or with business organization is to provide them with multiple earning and non-earning opportunities to develop their creative work [36].

Thus, despite the differences between the two, Arts and Business can develop mutually beneficial collaborative relationships where both partners learn from each other, evolve and go in hand with fast changing business environment.

VIII. CONCLUSION

If today’s business wants to succeed, it shall not miss the benefits CI can offer. CI as a natural source of creativity and innovation would open new horizons and help businesses to

better spot new opportunities and directions and evolve faster. Creative, 2-way, mutually involved and mutually affecting partnerships between, on one side –organizations and artists from the CI, on the other side -business field, would create a synergy, which would allow both sides to benefit. Despite the differences, these partnerships formed from representatives with diverse skills, personality, values and perceptions would be ideally positioned for innovation, which is so critical for 21st century business success.

However, successful partnerships are not easy to establish and maintain, thus, efforts have to be made by all engaged partners so that differences become a source of new ideas, products and ways of working.

Major companies all over the world convey a positive feedback regarding engagement with Arts sphere; thus, it is of crucial importance to take their experience further for better understanding of how business and Arts can work together.

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