

Wopreneur



Calling the Shots

In an industry where women direct only 6% of movies, meet Alankrita Shrivastava who speaks with refreshing openness

+ A Theatrical Journey

Looking at the crystal ball we meet Queens of Drama - Mahabano, Yuki & Foezeh

+ Happy In The Head

The journey of a small town girl to becoming an actress without the 'Filmi' background

+ Insta Stories

We meet up with Ayesha Adlakia aka Elena Sparrow as she shares her journey from finding herself to becoming an Insta Star

+ Impact of Section 377

Meet four strong women who have lived by their choices and the impact of recent judgement on Section 377 on their lives

ISSUE 1 OCT 2018



THINK TANK

MAGAZINE

COMMUNITY

Creating an ecosystem of support
for women entrepreneurs

#challenges #gender bias
#financial empowerment #consent

~ **b** inspired. **b** informed. **b** innovative ~

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EDITOR'S LETTER

At **'Wopreneur'** we are all excited to welcome you to the launch issue of the magazine. It's been an amazing journey for us, from getting the 'Wo' team together to finally launching the magazine, believe it or not we have done it in three months flat, call us the 'Wo Super Team'.

Our gallery of women entrepreneurs, entertainers and women from the creative field are shaking up the status quo. Be it Alankrita Shrivastava an award winning writer/director or Aahana Kumra a small town girl to now Bollywood actress, both without a 'Filmi' background, to the amazingly Ayesha Adlakia aka Elena Sparrow on how from an experimental teenager she became an Instagram sensation, these inspiring women help us see that you have to believe, act and achieve.

Amongst our other stories we have interesting insights into the entrepreneurial journey of women in creative field, from case studies to best apps in business, alternate funding options and how we can tap into our own creativity.

With this issue we hope they inspire you to experiment with your ideas, be creative and give you an insight to the determination, grit and resilience of all the women interviewed and hope they inspire you, the same way as they inspired us when we met them.

One of the best parts of being a part of the magazine team is the kind of people you get to meet, who inspire you and make you believe that you can!



Neha

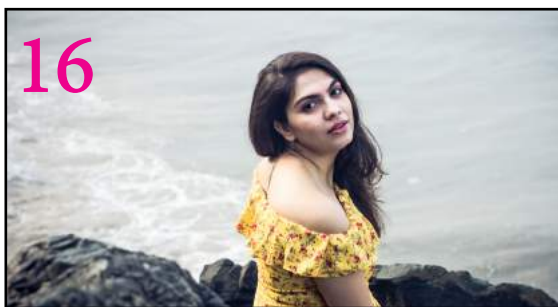
Neha Chatterjee
Managing Editor

"Some days, there won't be a song in your heart. Sing Anyways"

- Emory Austen



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YOUNG & CREATIVE

The leap of faith

- Nisha Serai

Start ups are ubiquitous today, but are they really easy? Well let's figure it out on our way as we get into this whirlwind ride to meet these talented women with an entrepreneurial spark. As a start up there are times when you want to quit on the idea and are skeptical, as scalability and sustainability are big challenges. We researched some homegrown **"Aamchi Mumbai"** entrepreneurs who are fearlessly proceeding in unknown territories and have taken the famed 'leap of faith'. These self-funded entrepreneurs share why they dived into the entrepreneurship journey and reveal their combat with obstacles and criticisms, which definitely will plant a seed of self thought in every budding entrepreneur. From poise to the power to dream these young millennials have been grinding it in the right direction and are stepping forward to claim their place, breaking the 'told you so' stereotype.

Rashmi Dhanwani

At the initial meeting I thought of thousands of engaging conversations that replayed in my mind while sitting at our office waiting for Rashmi Dhanwani founder of Art X. Rashmi's venture looks promising to create an impact in the cultural practices for projects and organizations that want to grow sustainably and strategically. Their core strategy is that they operate at the intersection of arts and access, they enable access to arts via Audience Development and Arts Research, in simple terms an organization that brings audiences and art institutions together through creative projects.

An independent arts consultant who expresses herself freely and is fiercely determined to create an eco-system for building audiences in the cultural sector through strategic intervention, highlights, that to scale up the business in a un-structured environment is an obstacle currently. Rashmi's work also includes collaboration with museums, arts content development and research mapping.

The passionate entrepreneur quit her career with NCPA and answered her calling and moved to UK for her Masters and returned to Mumbai in 2015 to begin Art X. Her struggle for access of funding for her masters scholarship, lead her to an extensive research and creation of a popular social media group Arts and Culture Opportunities,Residencies,Workshops for widening opportunities and information in this sector and has 46k followers.

"We women have the power to author our own stories" Rashmi narrated excitingly. Rashmi has been associated with various causes and events such as Mumbai Batti Bandh, a green campaign started in India on the lines of Earth Hour 60 in December 2007; the Literature section of the Mumbai Kala Ghoda Arts Festival (KGAF) 2008; and the Children's Literature section of KGAF 2009. A company with X factor, most definitely something to look forward to!

Rashmi says, "We women have the power to author our own stories"



Radhika Dialani

A key challenge for any start up is to have their own USP, hence the need to innovate and give something distinctive to the customers. Today in a world inundated with an array of different products, it's not tough to look for a quick gift for someone is it? But does that gift epitomize your true feelings for the recipient. Looking for OUT of the Box gifting ideas, when you can find customized gifting options inside this box. 'The Signature box', makes the gifting option personalized which empowers the customer to gift their loved ones these specially curated range of products and also ascertains a certain connection which is priceless.

The "Signature" which is unique to each one of us, reflects on each product brought as a personalized gifting definitely has a back story to it, says Radhika founder of 'The Signature Box' whose passion for social media makes her explore the opportunities in this sector. This avid traveler, whose brand turns a year old this year, has her current product range of passport cover to travel sling bags which cater to both the retail and corporate sector. Radhika Dialani considers customer care as the core value and the pillar of the business, to which she gives personal attention.

Her advice to budding entrepreneurs
"Give it a try, before giving up"





<https://thesignaturebox.com/>



<https://www.notsoshabbyshop.com/>



<https://www.art-x.co>



<https://radiator.in/>



So next time you see a start up entrepreneur, do tap by to hear how did it all began, there is most definitely more twists and *challenges that an entrepreneur has faced* in her journey than what meets the eye.



Snehlani Nihlani

While exploring the alternative possibilities of the term creativity in the fashion sector, I met Snehlani Nihlani founder of Radio Rani. Her unique approach to the traditional jewellery, makes us venture into her world of quirky fashion trends which has gained admiration and raised curiosity of many eyeballs around. Snehlani, who was earlier an advertising professional, also mentioned that she was fondly addressed by her colleagues at work as Radio Rani, due to her love for the medium and since the brand is an extension of her personality; that's how the zingy brand name was born.

"My scout for designs which are unique and trendy inspired me to create this intricately designed calligraphy earrings collection".

Snehlani is also a copywriter and loves doing Calligraphy. She converted her brilliant idea of desi funny dialogues, that we hear in our daily lives, into an elegant piece of artwork which is pure silver handmade, why wear same earrings, isn't it boring? As she smiles her designs are still humming in our ears. While not being from the fashion sector and with a mentor to follow, did not hinder this Risky Rani who also deals in trendy designer unconventional sarees inspired by mythological women characters. Be creative, un-follow trends and experiment a lot is her brand concept...Well, she did ask me at the end of our conversation if I would like to do these desi dialogue earrings and guess what my answer would have been! Doesn't this label bring a collection that is like a breath of fresh air.



Vinanti Kothari

Usually investment is a matter of concern for those who decide to take the plunge. But one does not always need million dollars to implement an idea. Vinanti Kothari from 'Not So Shabby' proves this with her uniqueness and creativity. Why Not So Shabby? That was definitely my first question when I met Vinanti and she laughed as her fingers cleared some sawdust at her workshop "Every product is made out of love with my own hands and has a story to tell" the wood that is used is re-claimed and we try to retain some of its flaws to add to the character of the product.

"The idea is being imperfect can also be ridiculously amazing" And we definitely did agree to the fact when we saw her collection of chic colorful Lifestyle and Home Décor products.

The biggest challenge at the moment is managing all the back-end as well - social media, packaging, sending out shipments, buying materials I need, all on my own. Since it is a self-funded venture scaling up and cautiously re-investing in the business is the focus. But the passion of creating a product right from the scratch is what keeps me going, says Vinanti Kothari founder of the company. An architecture and interior background from UK helped her in creating her own line of customized products for which she learnt wood working too and her hard work shows. Today Vinanti's collection ranges from Lapdesks to Gallery wall decor as her best selling.

Happy in the Head

- Neha Chatterjee

*Having started her acting career in theatre with Ratna Pathak & Naseeruddin Shah as her mentors, we caught up with **AAHANA KUMRA** where she shared her insights and experience through her journey from a small town girl to being a Bollywood actress*

New Girl in Town

We moved from Lucknow to Mumbai when I was in school, the decision to move was made as Mumbai was more accessible for my father, who had a lot of International travel with his job. My mother also works in the police department and moving to Mumbai just gave us more time as a family, it just seemed like the right thing to do. In my family everybody is career oriented person and there is no connection to the film industry whatsoever hence nobody has what you call the 'Bollywood Connection'. Moving to Mumbai was a refreshing change, because in Lucknow one always had to be accompanied by a male member of the family after 6 p.m, while Mumbai felt safe. I struck a cord with the city as soon as I got here, it felt like home.



My Mentors

I am very lucky to have Ratna Ma'am and Naseer Sir as my mentors. Naseer Sir is a disciplinarian and so is Ratna Ma'am, she always says that when you are portraying a role think like a woman and have perspective of a woman. She has great insights in theatre and movies. One of her best advise was – "Theatre is life and in life you do not get retake, similarly in theatre you do not get retakes, if you make a mistake you take it forward, how you take it forward is a choice you have to make, either you cover it or build on it, but you get only a millisecond to make the choice" This has taught me to be grounded and be normal, so that you can see characters around you. Through theatre and my mentors I have been able to do that.

Summer At Prithvi

Two of my friends from my new school in Mumbai had enrolled for the 'Summer at Prithvi Theatre' hence I also enrolled. It was a theatre workshop for 10-15 days and we were straightaway thrown into puppet workshops, Shakespeare, Kabuki which is a Japanese form of theatre, I was feeling at one with all this and all of a sudden all this was very relevant with my being. Looking back, now I feel those 15 days were the best part of my life, that is when I had discovered my passion for acting and being on stage. My first acting certificate at Prithvi was handed over to me by Late Shree Shashi Kapoor. After this, I spent my whole summer at Prithvi doing whatever came my way mopping the floor, selling tickets, holding puppets. Very soon I realized that this is what I wanted to do, to be on stage it was magical.

My First Film

I was lucky to get my first film break with my Mentor Mr Nasseeruddin Shah, a director from Kerala Mr. Anoop Kurian was making a movie called 'The Blue Berry Hunt'. In this film, portraying the character of a girl who is kidnapped, was a very learning experience. My next movie was with Mr Makarand Deshpande called 'Sona Spa' which was first a play and then made into a movie. After that I got a role in "Lipstick under my Burkha", when Alankrita the writer and director of 'Lipstick' shared the script with me I felt I had to play this role as it was very relevant to women issues.



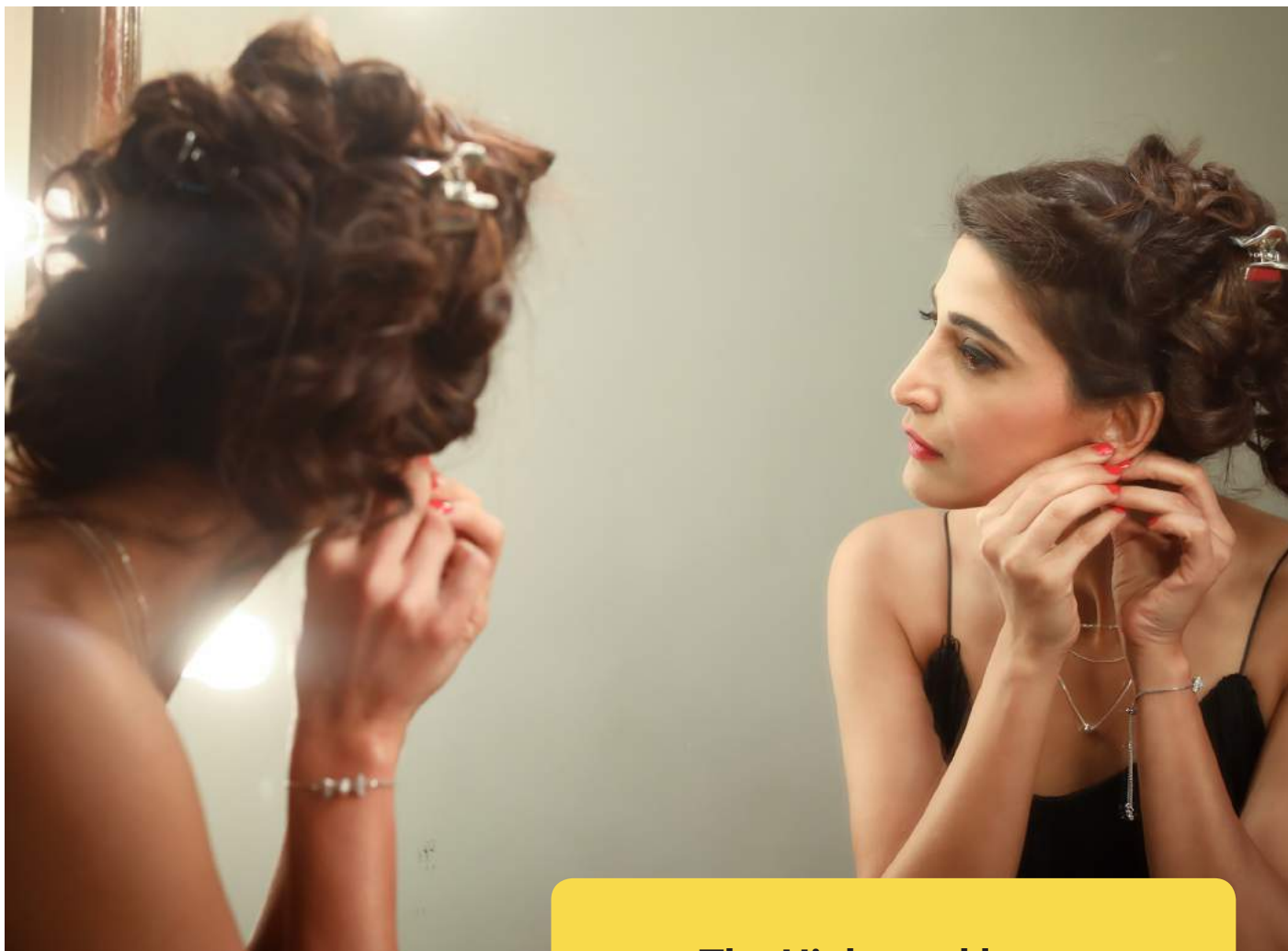
ADVICE TO ASPIRING ACTRESSES

“It's a very interesting time we are in where apart from films there are lots of opportunities young women are creating for themselves. They are writing content, creating their own websites, collaborating amongst themselves, lots of stuff. They are not depending on others to give them opportunities and are creating opportunities for themselves. I got this insight while shooting for various projects and interacting with the young women, am very fascinated by positive energy, clarity and confidence, they know what they want and have chartered the path to achieve their goals. They have so much support from their families and nobody is questioning their choice, I feel it's a great time to be a woman in the creative field. I would like to tell the young girls to act upon their ideas and see where it takes them.”



AAHANA KUMRA





Projects in pipeline

I have got a very interesting project coming up with Soni Razdan and Mahesh Bhatt called 'Truly Yours' the entire film has been shot in Kolkata and should be hitting the festivals very soon. Then there is 'The Accidental Prime Minister' it's a biopic on our former Prime Minister Mr. Manmohan Singh written by Sanjaya Baru that releases later this year. There are some upcoming projects which I am unable to speak about right now but all are interesting and I have varied roles.

Bollywood as an Industry

Abroad you get work because of your talent and how you project your characters on screen. I think and feel compared to that Bollywood is very unprofessional where you get work because of your surname, whom you know and who you hang out with. Here you have to be seen with certain people and as per me that's not right. I am not sure that this trend will last forever but that definitely makes you a star for that period of time. In a way that has never worked with me and I don't propagate that. I wish Bollywood was a fair industry where you would get work because of your talent.

The Highs and lows

In our industry there are various phases of highs and lows, they transcend very quickly too. When you are in your high the phone just never stops ringing and when you are going through low phase there are no calls, the phone doesn't ring at all, one feels like how can this be. For me the last one month has been like this the phone doesn't ring and all of a sudden I have all this time, I am spending my time watching a lot of shows and spending time with my family, which I haven't done for a long time, its been a great change. I think it's important that one must take the positives out of any phase. The high points never teaches us anything and we start to feel that it is always going to be like this for the rest of our lives. There will be times when your phone doesn't ring and I think one should be prepared for that, to balance both because until you see failures you'll never know what success means, failures are the best teachers.





Core Values

Understanding our core values is hugely important, but how important are they and what impact do they have on our businesses?

Core values are what define us as individuals; they are what influence our attitudes and they definitely determine our behaviours.

In a business the core values are those criterias that form the foundation on which the organisation is built. They originate from the business owner as a person, as the organisation develops, they influence the standard and level of service as well as how individuals within that organisation conduct themselves.

“Your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become your words. Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits. Your habits become your values. Your values become your destiny.”

To develop both your business and your personal brand to its full potential, you have to pay attention to the 4 Vs Principle:

•**VALUES** – who you are, what you believe, what you want and your route to achieving your goals.

•**VISUALS** – your visual impact and the visual impact of your company.

•**VOCALS** – what you say, how you say it and who you say it to.

•**VERBALS** – building your reputation and brand through the written word, whether it's copy on a website, a leaflet, a blog, articles or social media.

Of the four, the 'V' for values is always the starting point because it's the most important. Your core values underpin everything from the colours you use in your brand to the words you use on your website; from where, when and how you network to the content of the messages you send out via Twitter.

WITHOUT THE FIRST 'V'—VALUES—YOU CAN'T EFFECTIVELY DEVELOP THE VISUAL, VOCAL OR VERBAL ASPECTS OF YOURSELF OR YOUR BUSINESS.

When you do this exercise it's often useful to include in your set of five a word or a phrase that is something you aspire to be.

The primary business benefit of identifying your core values is clarity. You'll find they really help in the business development and decision-making process: 'If I do this particular thing, will it compromise or contribute to my values?' For your customers and potential customers, values clarify the identity and culture of your business so they can decide if it's the kind of organisation they want to 'buy into'. In the end, your core values can really impact on your bottom line.

SO, HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOUR CORE VALUES?

The 5 Words Exercise



1 Take a blank sheet of A4 paper and brainstorm all the words and phrases you feel best describe you and your values. You may come up with things such as honest, trustworthy, confident, ethical etc. Fill the sheet completely. This may take you a few days don't rush it.



2 Once you have all the words or phrases you can think of, start to go through the list and look for themes; for example, honest and trustworthy are quite similar in meaning, so if you had to choose just one of them, which would it be? Identify all the synonyms and choose one for each group of meanings.



3 Continue to hone and define the list until you're left with five words or phrases that you are sure describe who you are.



4 The next thing you have to do is ask at least five people (preferably more) to give you five words that they would use to describe you. It's important that you ask a whole variety of people – friends, relatives, customers, business colleagues, your ex-boss, someone you manage – as this will give you more of a 360° look at yourself.



5 Once you have your words and their words, again start to look for patterns – words that are the same or similar. What you're doing here is ensuring that what you think of yourself and your exhibited attitudes and behaviours match. In the end it's what we do (behaviours) that identify the real 'us' rather than our perceived versions of ourselves.



6 At the end of this exercise you'll have five words that describe you – and these are your core values.

Don't try to be somebody you're not because it doesn't work. If you try to be this perfect person or perfect persona of what you think that somebody should be, it's just not going to work. Be yourself and stay true to your core values.

Networking provides an essential means of raising your profile and should be an integral part of your marketing strategy. Through active and regular networking, you expand your pool of resources, by meeting new professional contacts, developing relationships and generating leads. The wide variety of networking platforms to choose from provides you with lots of opportunities to connect with people in different ways – try these for size...

Ready, Aim, Network!

Choose the right networking environment based on the benefits you aim to gain from networking



Online Networking

Ideal if your networking aims are to...

- Understanding the key issues in your industry.
- Reach a wide range of potential contacts on a global scale.
- Position your business in relation to your sector.

Networking online is often perceived as a remote and impersonal means of connecting with people, as it lacks the face-to-face contact required for building business relationships.

However, the global nature of the online community carries the advantage of casting the net wide, reaching a far greater range of people than you would normally have the opportunity to interact with. Online business networks come in many forms, ranging from social networks such as LinkedIn, as well as the many business forum based on interest groups (such as women in business) or that discuss industry-specific subjects.

Member's Club

Ideal if your networking aims are to...

- Gain access to key contacts in your industry.
- Immerse yourself in a physical environment focused on your sector
- Attend events tailored to your business interests.

Members' clubs generally provide a physical place to work, with workstations and meeting rooms along with business-support services, where members benefit from the facilities.

They tend to incorporate the functions of social clubs and business clubs, where events run by the club give members the chance to network. Members clubs come in many forms, with collaborative workspaces such as Innov8 and Springboard springing up alongside the more established and formal members' clubs favoured by business leaders, such as the Chamber of Commerce, CII etc.

The industry-specific and often selective membership criteria tends to attract individuals focused on gaining influence and access to key players in their industry, you to position your business and your message.

By offering a 'big picture' perspective, on-line networks can raise your awareness of the wider 'conversations' in your sector, helping you to position your business and your message.

Referral-based Networking

Ideal if your networking aims are to...

- Build and sustain relationships over a period of time.
- Have your own 'sales team' to promote your business
- Present your business regularly within a structured environment.

Like private clubs, referral-based networking models such as BNI are often based on membership. Members meet on a regular basis at a physical venue over breakfast or lunch.

In each meeting, members present their pitch and business activities in a particular format, enabling them to practise and refine their presentation skills and business proposition.

The effectiveness of this model requires a sustained effort and commitment to the group by developing relationships built on integrity and trust. Over time, referral-based networking encourages familiarity with each other's businesses in order to confidently refer other members' services to their customers and clients. Tracking referrals and the business generated from them is a measurable way to see whether this option works for you.

Networking Events

Ideal if your networking aims are to...

- Work the room for a specified purpose.
- Gain exposure to a varied group of businesses.
- Enjoy access to a mix of sector, policy and larger trade-related issues.

Networking events give you introductions to a broad spectrum of businesses, suppliers, affiliates and sponsors across a particular industry with the added benefit of seminars, advice and industry leaders attending as speakers.

There are also bigger industry events which may be geared towards larger aims such as encouraging international trade or focusing on showcasing the biggest and brightest in a specific sector or the wider business community. Due to the scale of these events, it's advisable to prepare in advance with a clear focus on the kinds of contacts you wish to connect with.



By offering a 'big picture' perspective, online networks can raise your awareness of the wider 'coverations' in your sector, helping you to position your business and your message.

Speed networking provides an ideal opportunity for you to hone the basic skills of effective networking.

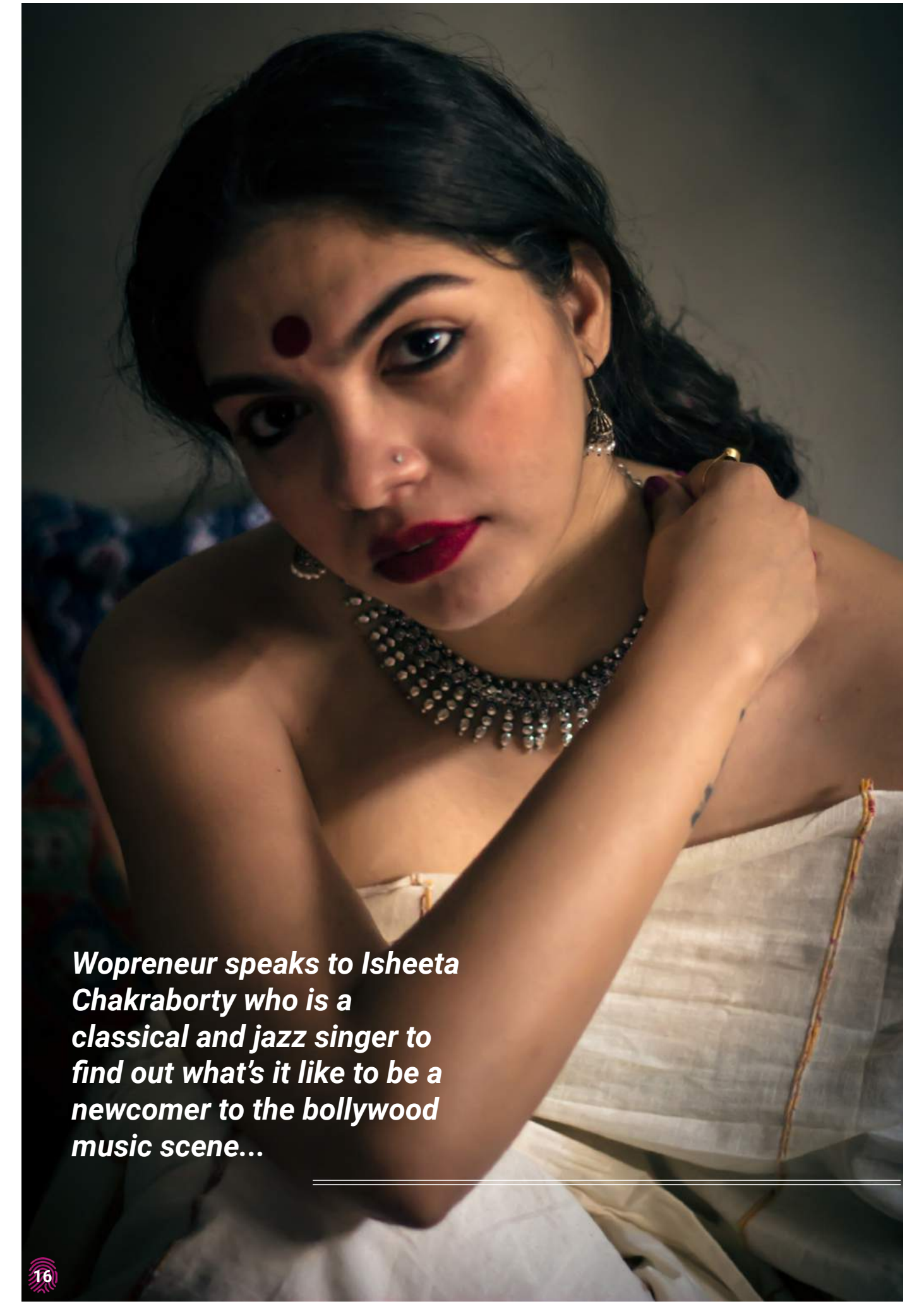
Describing yourself and what your business has to offer in a clear and concise way is a great way to perfect your 'elevator pitch' – that fleeting 20 seconds where you make that essential first impression, conveyed not just in what you say but also in your tone and body language.

Having a limited time to break the ice with a wide variety of people removes the pressure of getting it wrong, as you have another chance to repeat your pitch with the next person in a matter of minutes! Speed networking is also a convenient option if you have little time to network, giving you the opportunity to generate good leads, which you can subsequently follow up on at a less hurried pace.

Speed Networking

- Ideal if your networking aims are to...
- Perfect your 'first impression'...
- Time your networking conveniently to fit in with your working day
- Generate leads as a starting point for business relationships





Wopreneur speaks to Isheetta Chakraborty who is a classical and jazz singer to find out what's it like to be a newcomer to the bollywood music scene...

Case-Study

W

hat made you take up singing as a profession?

I have been singing and training since I was 4 years old, and since then the idea of being a musician was ingrained in me by my guru's. Currently I am training under Aarti Kalekar Tikekar, who is a double award winning musician and resides in Pune. My career started in Kolkata, where I worked with Mr Mayunk Bhoumik, who is a national award winning music director. I learned the craft of being a professional singer from him. I have assisted him as a composer in Bengali films. While in Kolkata I also got a chance to sing Jazz with Guitar Maestro Carlton Kitto, who is unfortunately no more, my Jazz journey began with him.

‘It’s very fascinating to be in a place where you are constantly inspired, learning and also sharing the same energy ’

How was the journey moving from all that to Mumbai and as a newcomer, has Mumbai worked for you?

When I moved to Mumbai, I straightaway knew it was very different for starters. Bollywood was huge in terms of scope, Mumbai was the place to be. The city has the infrastructure and so many interesting collaborations with artists. Coming to Mumbai has been like learning on the job and the city has been kind to me. I have found amazing support, love and adoration, it never fails to amaze me. Have also found a mentor in Louis Banks. It's very fascinating to be in a place where you are constantly learning, being inspired and also sharing the same energy.

I have had the best launch in Bollywood I could have asked for Yash Raj Banner with Vishal Shekhar as music directors for the Salman Khan blockbuster – Sultan. Am also recording a few films projects which I am unable to speak about now, it's all good and interesting.

What’s your advice to newcomers & wannabe singers?.

Be authentic and keep following your dream, your passion, your goal because that's what is going to keep you rooted to your reality. When you are professional, on time and willing to learn, the thirst to know more shows and gets you work. No matter how good you are, you have to have a pulse of reality and not chase an illusion. If you are all this and know your craft, doors will open for you, it's a good time to be here and in the industry, opportunities galore!



We are all Creative!

-Meenakshi Pathak

In awe of Creative Geniuses

When we think of creativity, often we restrict ourselves with the notion that creativity has to be born through Creative Geniuses, artists, musicians, painters and so on... by those associated with the creative field. We see creativity being alive only through those embodying it through their occupation. In awe, we admire such creative geniuses for the magic they create through their artwork. We become so awestruck with their brilliance, that with all our love we put them, we put them on a higher pedestal of admiration, almost worshipping them like a god.

Though it's a blessing to have their presence in our life, but unconsciously we disconnect the chords with our own creative wilderness that's reverberating in each one of us.

Feeding self-doubt, pampering Inner Critic

Most of us have grown up feeding in our system of self-doubt, self-sabotage, self-criticism and self-ridicule hence we don't need anyone else to do the honors to kill the vibrant self, and slowly it spreads like an epidemic in our own being. Now we need to replace it with self-love, self-confidence, self-acceptance and self-esteem so to give birth to the creative self.



Re-invent Perspective

To befriend our creative self, we will have to land into a space called, My Own World, where 'nothing' works. Yes, tapping into the "nothingness" and from there we will find the lead towards the path of creation; 'doing nothing' is the portal where we enter into the realms of mystery. The wellspring of creation already exists, we only need to take a few sips from there with our imagination, thereby giving birth to the nectar of our own creativity.

Where does Creation come from ?

How do we even start to think of what comes naturally as my idea, my product, my service, my offering? While contemplating on this, let's think about how creation happens in nature. From where does the flower come and bloom? And there begins the journey of the seed, which slowly starts breathing through leafs turning into a plant, showing its presence more with its branches then becoming a tree of its own. That tree blooming with flowers and fruits comes from the tiny seed once sown. This seed can be seen as a source from where the process of creation is born. A tiny thought flowering in to an idea, giving birth to a unique creation.

Flying the kite of Imagination, flowing in the river of feeling

'Imagination is the highest kite one can fly' is a quote I had read in a cafe. And this kite comes free of cost and can take us anywhere in the world without any visa. I often travel to the unknown world and my imagination keeps me busy 'doing nothing' which is a pre-requisite to invoke and invite the muse.

imagination keeps me busy 'doing nothing' which is a pre-requisite to invoke and invite the muse. In the creation process, imagination and feeling are the two ingredients, "feeling" senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Feelings are the fuel that gives life to our imagination.

Be Experimental ~ Keep the Inner child alive, Playfulness is the key

The best way to invoke creativity is to invite the inner child within us. A child never thinks of how others will see me, whether my expressions and actions will be appreciated or rejected. Only adults need validation from others and get into the perfectionist and judgmental game. A child always expresses freely with an insatiable curiosity and this playfulness in the creation process is the life force of creativity.

Break the Rules, Breaking Boundaries

"No Rule" is the rule to be followed in the creative process. Wherever our imagination takes us on travel we should be there to create. Making 'mistakes' is a bonus as it sets your creation apart from others, making it unique and you get labeled as a 'weirdo'. Bingo !!

Inclination to find Inspiration

We all are born with instinctual nature where the origin of our creative expressions lives. To make an effort with an inclination to know what inspires us, this surge to create is something that may arise from 'nothing'.

So, with all our passion and enthusiasm, let's invite the 'genie' residing in our hearts, to unravel our hidden creativity.



CALLING THE

Shots

With an open engaging approach and a refreshing presence we met [Alankrita Shrivastava](#) – The much talked about director of *Turning 30* & *Lipstick Under My Burkha*, winner of several awards, shares her story and insights with Wopreneur.

- Neha Chatterjee



Film is a way of expressing yourself

and sharing that expression with many others and until that happens you don't feel complete. So there's this kind of madness that grips you till it comes out and until then there's nothing else one thinks about. It's that compelling thought in ones mind, you wake up with that and you sleep with that, there's no other purpose in life.

My obsession with films started while in school, one of my hobby classes was audio-visual classes. There would be presentations by seniors and the best documentary would be shown on big screen on founders day. During one of the sessions my seniors presented short films with pictures and music, as I watched what they were presenting, it gave me goose bumps; I was in awe and felt like telling stories using this medium. Being an avid reader myself I knew this is something I would love to do for the rest of my life.

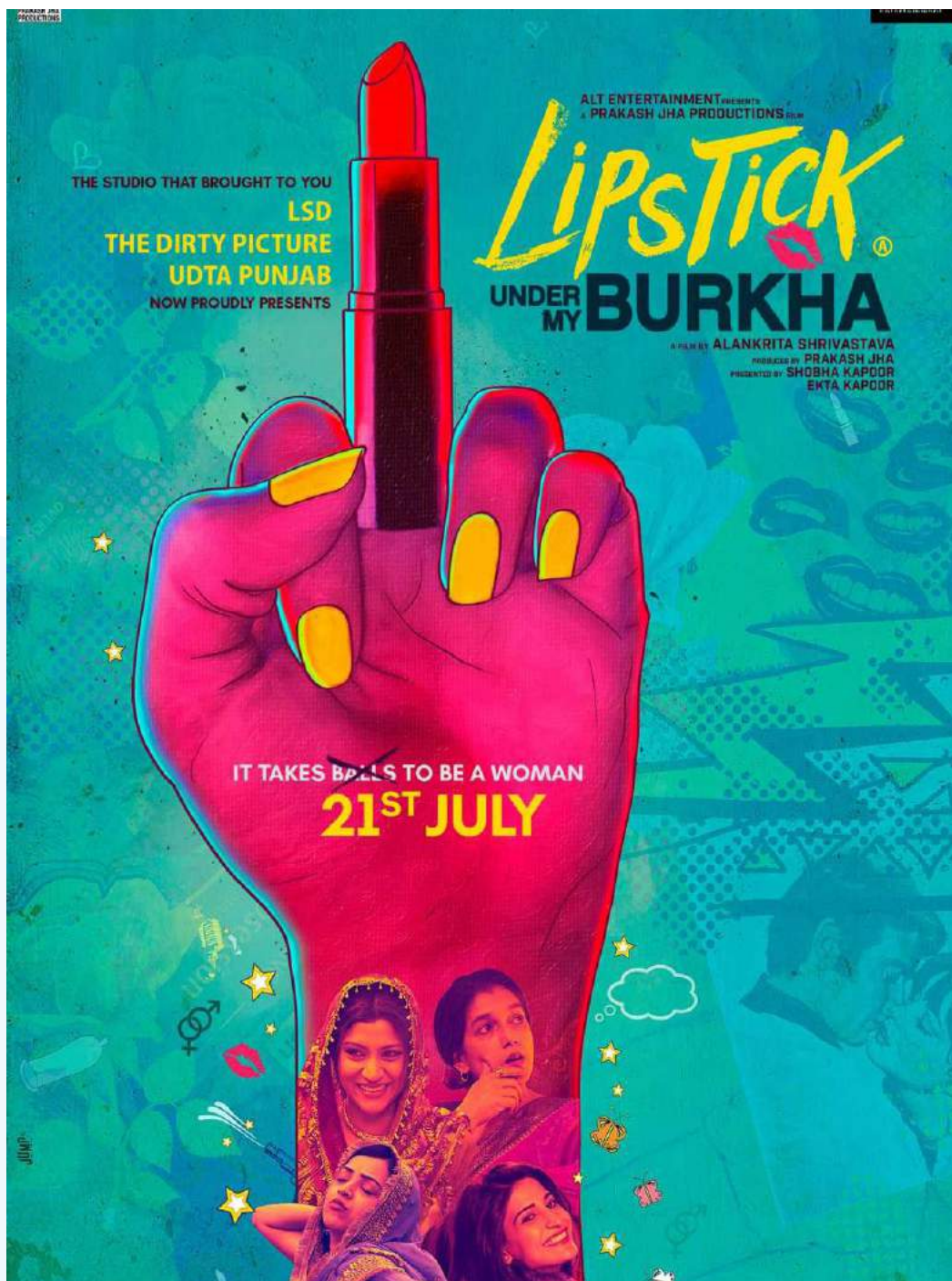
Often I feel I live in an imaginary world, half of the time I am imagining things

So choosing the profession of being a writer telling stories using this medium seemed the natural thing to do. My parents come from a much more conventional background, my father was an IAS/IFS topper, while my mother is from IIM Ahmedabad and had a career with the UN.

So they were used to very regular kind of profession but when I mentioned my passion for telling stories using films as a medium they were very encouraging and open to me pursuing whatever I wanted to do, this is what fueled my passion.

Once I finished school, I did my Journalism from Lady Shriram College and then pursued Masters in Mass Communication from Jamia. After my masters, I wanted to move to Mumbai and assist in directing movies. Mr Prakash Jha who does lot of social work in Bihar knew my mother as she was working with the UN in Bihar so they were friends.

While in Jamia I joined my mother and Mr Jha for lunch, and Mr Jha asked me what I was planning to do, I mentioned that after my course was over I would move to Mumbai and start assisting in feature films, so he said 'Why don't you come and intern with me?' it sounded like a great idea and that's how my association with Mr Jha started. My mother of course told me to go at my 'own risk'.



After my internship was over, I continued working with Prakash Jha Productions, got the chance to assist Mr Jha in Gangajal, from there I started working on various feature films and was associate director in 'Rajneeti'. Following this I wanted to start the next step in the journey which is when I wrote and directed my first feature film 'Turning 30'

The fact that films like 'Hyderabad Blues' 'Monsoon Wedding' were made and I realized that films like this can be made, which don't necessarily follow the conventional tools.

It made me feel like its possible to make films which are not main stream kind of stuff. I was always more attracted to that style of story telling. It's important that the films have a point to make, they are stories that I really want to tell.

When I moved to Mumbai I was new to the city, without any money and unstable as our industry is, but in spite of all these factors there was a lot of passion and enthusiasm. My parents were my pillars of support and gave me the confidence to follow my passion. You have to be clear about what your priorities are, I am not in this profession for financial benefits, its driven by passion. Once I had written my film I was not sure if it would get made or

not, Mr Jha produced my film and 'Turning 30' was made. I was very happy when the film got made and released, but it didn't do very well in the box office, so when I wanted to make my second film it was a real struggle. But I was very clear as to what I wanted to do and where I was going, having that clarity really helped. At that stage had I wanted many other things like more financial stability or a luxurious lifestyle, then I wouldn't have been able to pursue my dream. I feel that filmmaking is not something I do just because you want to make a film, there are enough people doing that. For me it's very important to tell the stories that I want to tell and films just happen to be that sort of medium. Being able to tell these stories inspires me to write my films. I am not such a movie enthusiast but I love to read and writing comes quite instinctively. To me the craft of screen writing is 'honing' where I feel like doing a lot of work and one gets better as one does it. My next film is also written by me and am in the process of finalizing the cast.

Once this film is made I will see if I can work with what others have written, as it becomes very difficult to write and direct a film , writing takes a long time.

When I am writing I feel shooting is better, when I am shooting I feel writing is much better, when I am editing I feel writing and shooting is much better, but the truth be told the most difficult part is getting the film released.

I had to struggle to release 'Turning 30' and the journey to release 'Lipstick Under My Burkha' I can't even begin to recount the challenges faced. So I feel that the hardest part is to mount the film, to get the money and to put it all together. Writing, directing and editing are the easy bits, there is release, distribution and censorship, so it's all about how to make it really happen, to get everything done requires a lot of grit and determination.

A lot of people are very talented but figuring out how to get it all together is the thing and I find these things more challenging and painful. I also realize that with the kind of films I want to make, struggle will be a part of the process, it will always be more difficult to mount and release.

With 'Lipstick' I stuck to my ground, in spite of the problems faced because I believed that these stories had to be told and needed to reach the audience.

Film is a way of expressing yourself and sharing that expression with many others and until that happens you don't feel complete. So there's this kind of madness that grips you till the film comes out and until then there's nothing else one thinks about. It's that compelling thought in one's mind, you wake up with that and you sleep with that, there's no other purpose in life. For me it's like life or death, like my life is in this film, whatever happens it has to come out.

'Lipstick' travelled to many international film festivals around the world and that made me feel less alone, it gave me a lot of energy to continue the struggle to get the film released in India. I see a lot of people who start out and halfway change their path; I feel that if you keep at it, it actually happens, one has to keep faith in themself.

There are always going to be forces telling you that it's not going to happen, but you have to listen to your inner voice and continue to do what you believe in.

Film making is a difficult journey and unless you are ready to stake it all, it's very difficult to stay on track. There are only 6% of the movies that get made by women film directors so you have to encourage yourself, nobody else is going to encourage you.



If you are clear what you want and this is the only thing you want to do then keep at it, keep your eyes on the goal ahead and just keep moving.



Wopreneur Events

Wopreneur events are for women who want to create a successful and fulfilling working life for themselves in a thought provoking /learning environment with like-minded women.

As the economy continues to grow, there has never been a better time for women entrepreneurs to take center stage. According to Women's Global Entrepreneurship study by Dell, business in India is booming with eight out of ten women entrepreneurs reporting that they are hiring staff and maintaining a confident outlook for business growth.

It is clear that the encouragement and support of women's entrepreneurial aspirations are integral to the upward development of the wider economy and financial empowerment of women is the key to many issues related to women and the society at large.





Wopreneur Think Tank

This is an invitation only event where we invite attendees from different businesses and have a discussion about the challenges faced while starting/growing their business, the idea is to identify the challenges, share best practices and create solutions. We hold these events in various locations in co-working spaces in and around Mumbai. Connect with Wopreneur Community for latest updates or write to info@wopreneur.com to get invited for our forthcoming event.

This is the perfect event for women who want to start and build their businesses from firm foundations, ensuring growth and professional fulfilment.



Wopreneur Online Forum

An online forum that connects and facilitates collaborations. Encouraging business between members thereby creating business referrals and value within the community. The forum also has mentors, business coaches, finance, IT & funding specialists. This is where you can connect with new and established women in business and network with women as invested in achieving excellence as you are. This is a platform where you can share your journey and present your business to a group of innovative and intelligent women.

This is a perfect forum if you are looking for new business and collaborations.

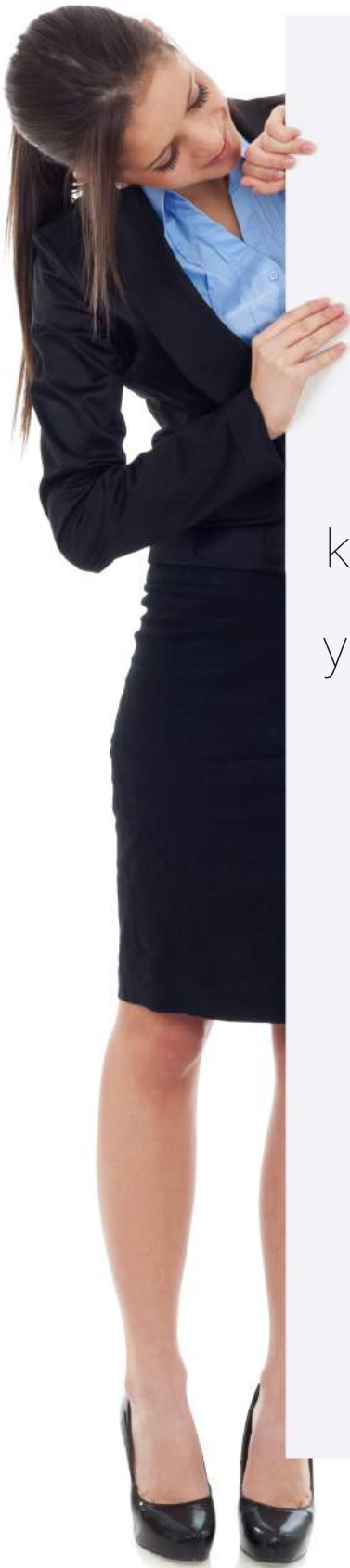


Want to find out more?

Get in touch with us at info@wopreneur.com or checkout our events page at wopreneur.com or connect with the wopreneur community on facebook.

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5

key questions
your business
plan should
answer

What is my vision?

What are my assumptions
based on?

Do I have the most
effective business model?

How do I see my
business developing?

Which resources do I need
and which do I already
have?

"To measure your success, you need to define what success looks like"

Plan for *Success*

People generally associate the need to prepare a business plan with looking for funding or potential partners. Yet investing in the process of preparing and maintaining a business plan for your own purposes can be of great benefit to aspiring and established business owners alike.

Planning

Clarifies your vision

Your business plan is far more than a document constructed to impress investors. It's your statement of intention, representing the foundation from which your business will grow. In his book 'Start With Why' Simon Sinek explains that the quality which sets innovative and creative businesses apart from the rest is the sustained connection to and clarity of their reason for being their core vision.

Successful businesses consistently think, act and communicate with their customers in a way which demonstrates their core vision and which permeates everything from product development and interaction with customers to marketing strategies and business growth. Clarifying why you do what you do attracts customers who relate to your vision because, whatever your product or service, your customers ultimately respond to what your business stands for.

Maintaining a strong sense of vision also fuels the essential factors of inspiration and motivation, sustaining you through the inevitable challenges of being in business.

* For more on core values and vision, see our article on pages 64-65.

Planning

Reflects your current position

When setting out to write your business plan, make it your objective to create an accurate reflection of your current position. For maximum effectiveness, start from a place of raw self-honesty. This can be an uncomfortable process; putting ideas on paper gives life to them and makes you accountable for their execution.

An honest assessment of where you stand reveals the gaps in your plan, and will at first raise more questions than answers. A constructive mindset to adopt at the early stages is to appreciate your business plan as a work in progress. View the questions which arise as a good starting point, enabling you to stand back and objectively explore solutions and opportunities.

It's essential to thoroughly question your underlying assumptions relating to your customers, competitors, the market and the industry. As far as possible, you'll need to ensure that the information underlying your assumptions comes from a range of solid sources, such as reputable market and industry data, backed up by your own reliable primary research or track record.

Planning

Creates a roadmap

Writing your business plan determines where you are, in relation to where you want to be, and is generally based on a three to five-year projection. Plotting your strategy – your roadmap – is integral to this process, in which you identify the route and key milestones for your business growth. This process reveals which resources you already have and the ones you'll need to get to proactively develop your business.

The more you're able to identify resource gaps, in the form of the people, funding, skills, research and experience required to realise your vision, the clearer your business strategy will become. The key developmental stages in your business strategy should include the mode and direction of growth, ways to reach different markets, how to expand your range of goods and services, and defining when and how to exit.

Using your business plan as your roadmap to success places you in a better position to respond proactively, rather than leaving you on the back foot and reacting to the inevitable challenges you'll face in your business.

Planning

Defines your outcomes

To measure your success, you need to define what success looks like. Defining your outcomes – your goals – helps you to consciously plan for growth, by identifying the resources and strategies you'll need for your business to grow in the direction you've determined.

By the same token, while your business plan presents a snapshot of your current position, it's important to maintain an adaptable and flexible approach towards your business plan. Treat it as a living document, a continual work in progress, subject to revision and refinement as your business evolves with time and changing circumstances. Get into the habit of reviewing and updating your business plan once every three, six or 12 months as appropriate.

Forming this habit as an integral part of your business activity leaves you open to exploring different scenarios, opportunities in the market and ways to streamline your business model to maximum effect.



a theatrical journey

Looking at the crystal ball: Loves & Lives of Theatre Makers in Mumbai

An artist is a beast. The kind that can chew up all the darkness of the times. And a woman artist is a ferocious, dangerous one. She has the wild, magnanimous power to transform the past & present into future that ought to be. As a theatre actor/director she innately possesses the basic entrepreneurial abilities such as the courage to trust one's visions and take risks to forge ahead and create a new reality on just on the stage but also the society.

-Rashi Bunny

Meet **Mahabano Modi Kotwal**, known for revolutionizing the voice of hundreds of vaginas through the beliefs of the playwright Eve Ensler "Finding violence against women means opening to the great power of women, the mystery of women, the heart of women, the wild unending sexuality and creativity of women – and not being afraid." Director of **The Vagina Monologues** who stepped on the stage at the age of 3 in silver shorts and a pair of beautiful wings and received the best play (Birds & Bees) trophy that was taller than her, Mahabano has stood firm and tall on the world stage as an actor & director for decades living her philosophy for life

"If it is to be, it is up to me."



Educated in microbiology & geology, she was probably the first stand up comedian in India during late 90's. As an actor, director and producer in film, television, theatre and radio, with over 60 credits to her name in India and abroad, Mahabano stands out as an idol for women looking to make a difference. She was moved by enormous impact of her play "The Vagina Monologues" women rushed to meet her at the auditoriums and airports sharing stories of their power & creating a new destiny as they owned up their vaginas. She also founded The Make-A -Difference Foundation which raises funds and awareness to combat violence against women and children.

Yet the heart of the theatre maker saddened to express the fact that while our vernacular theatre is excellent, unfortunately English theatre suffers from lack of support from the govt. and or corporates. No one can make a living just doing English theatre... this results in talented actors not being able to commit as they have to put two square meals on the table daily. Theatre rentals, sets, storage of sets, their transport have become exorbitant." The radiant, bubbly septuagenarian smiles and reiterates

"But what can one do when one has tasted blood – the magic of Theatre - despite living in a society of 'open legs and shut minds' ?!!"

What
does
Empowerment mean to you?

"To do what you want to do, to be how you want to be, to choose what you wish for"



And then there are families like that of editor-publisher Bina Sarkar and Rafeeq Ellias, a documentary filmmaker, artist & art lovers who were both 'minimalist' and high on 'aesthetics' with a social consciousness, bringing up **YUKI** with choices and opportunities not common for girls in majority of India. Theatre allows "Freedom" and "liberates from every day constricted being and behaving. You can experience so much more by the act of transforming."

Debuting into Direction, she reminisces the days of her life as an actor/ star on stage, "Performing THE MIDNIGHT'S SUMMER DREAM under Tim Supple at the greatest venues around the world for 2 years was the best Live training for an artist, something that doesn't happen in India. And the odd jobs like "waitressing and babysitting to pay for your training abroad builds endurance, humility and respect for work for work sake, besides making your arms strong!"

With age, excitement takes new forms of educated decision making.

When you are an actor you are fitting in someone else's larger vision, and sometimes their stories may not interest you and ways of working may not match with yours' and so the next best decision was to Direct my own play where one gets to collaborate with designers, musicians, actors, writers who bring forth your vision through their expertise & talent.

But the truth is that theatre has a small audience, my language has been English that could be a limitation, I do not create commercial theatre and then the large auditoriums present a huge economic difficulty. But I don't think about changing the system. I am busy making up my own system, generating out of the box opportunities. One way to change a system is to defy the odds and limitations and make new roads with new destinations for yourself." She looks serious even though her eyes sparkle bright !

Theatre is a great combination of imagination, body, senses, playing in a way that normal humans don't allow themselves to.

When I am a hyena wanting to migrate (character in Elephant in the room) is who I am supposed to be, then I really am that fully and completely and that only theatre can do! When I am running on one for 20 minutes on a spot on stage, there is a flame of existence different from normal day-to-day life. That's all.

The awe-inspiring role of a family that supports a holistic development along with an evolved schooling system that exposes you to the real stories of powerful, resilient women in your impressionable years, it all comes back strongly when the time is right!

What does Empowerment mean to you?

YUKI

"To be allowed the opportunity and choices of learning, working, earning. These are very important. These are the biggest."



**“I’m him, I’m them and of course
I’m her, I’m Shiva, I’m Parvati,
I’m Ardhnarishwar,
I’m the androgenous, the mister, the miss,
I’m the good and the evil too,
I’m me but I’m also you,
I’m the sublime,
I’m the timeless,
I’m all the universe encompassed.”**

These dialogues are from **Foezeh’s** play SHIKHANDI, conceived, written and directed by her on breaking the stereotypes about transgender, advocating equality and human rights.

Doing theatre in this country too is a lot like battling with the constraints.

The socio-political-economical manipulations in the governmental spaces like NCPA where the land is subsidized to promote artists but going against the purpose the administration is involved in giving its spaces for commercial revenue and is easily / financially available for foreign directors. Even in a place like Mumbai, the availability of rehearsal spaces, performance spaces and funding for meaningful theatre is a huge challenge. Give us the infrastructure, financial and trust that we Indians can do great theatre, and watch what the contemporaries can bring forth!”



So what makes Foezeh Jalali continue the war against the double standards of the society - “The desire to tell stories, especially ones I feel strongly for, and the need to create. To be able to think critically and creatively is a gift of Theatre.. Its freedom... what we need is bolder, bigger, better, More theatre.”

As they say, if you can drive in India, you can drive anywhere in the world, and so it is for theatre. The ways in which some of us professionally trained actors & directors have to work here, borders on shameful slavery to an unexplainable passionate pledge of doing Theatre.

The funding for meaningful and socially responsible Theatre is so sparse that there are discussions on what can we afford to feed our actors during an 8-hour rehearsal day. The commute by local trains to the stretches of residences and affordable rehearsal space, the juxta-positioning of hiring and paying good actors from the resources that come from you/your circle or from cross-funding by working at a gym or corporate training, there is the inevitable gamut of wanting to pursue professional theatre.

What does Empowerment mean to you?

“As a creative PERSON, I think my journey is what it is...! Women empowerment as a term sounds as if to diminish women.”

GO FUND YOURSELF!

- Meenakshi Pathak

Artists and creatives have many stories to share, while hearing their stories of success, challenges and of more challenges; we took a halt to look deeper into the aspect of funding. As success comes in the guise of countless obstacles, rest assured one must have crossed ocean full of hurdles before success came to

“ You have to be focused on the core product and what you are trying to bring to the market.”

As we dive into the ordeal creative people sail through, one of the biggest hurdles to overcome is often getting the funding required to get their innovative ideas and project off the ground. As most of us know that crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising money from a large number of people who each contribute a relatively small amount, typically via the Internet.

Creative crowdfunding is widespread medium of raising funds for creative causes - feature film, music, stand-up comedy, art, dance, photography, publishing, design, theatre, promotional events, host musical gigs, streets plays, gaming events, for initiatives like painting walls etc. Filmmakers and artists have successfully raised funds and fostered awareness through crowdfunding. The same goes for poets and authors who are looking for financial backing to get their books published or for musicians who are looking to buy adequate instruments to practice and perform.

Though crowd funding is evolving in India, there are many websites catering specifically for creative businesses and artists. Before getting into the selection of which platform you'll be choosing for your fundraising, you should have clarity about your project's overall vision. Certain platforms have higher success rates than others but the rest will go into your ability to successfully market your ideas.



What we really want to do is what we are really meant to do. When we do what we are meant to do, money comes to us, doors open for us, we feel useful, and the work we do feels like play to us.

- Julia Cameron



Where to Begin

The starting point for support begins with people you know. Family, friends, peers, and the communities you're part of will play a strong role as a foundation of your earliest supporters. Also, they are your biggest resources for spreading the word about your project.

Happiness is not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort.

Wishberry, Impact Guru , Catapooolt , Ketto, FuelADream, Crowdera

are some of the leading crowdfunding platforms exclusively dedicated to funding creative projects. Each will have their pros and cons—including the amount of commission and whether or not donations are taxable—so be sure to read the fine print when making your final decision. Crowdfunding websites are connecting entrepreneurs with investors, producers with patrons, and causes with contributors. These platforms provide its fund raisers the choice of either AON (All or Nothing) or KWYG (Keep What You Get) campaigns. When an AON campaign doesn't reach its goal, all the money collected is returned to funders.

Raise curiosity amongst the crowd about your product and project

Crowdfunding is emerging as a way of raising capital, encompassing social media coverage with the use of internet or social networking sites or some dedicated websites. So, the first step towards raising funds, you have to create an online profile, explain your project and fundraising goals and share the same with public at large, including your peers, relatives, friends of friends, and so forth. The wave of digital media is changing rapidly and is dynamic the way we market and communicate. Make use of tools such as live videos on FB, Instagram stories, Instagram boomerangs, filters for pictures, profile pictures and Facebook covers etc. It's a fact that your fundraiser will get the boost it needs through the power of social media. Hence make sure, you are using the platform right to get maximum donors.



Leave no stone unturned. Advertise your campaign equally strongly on digital world as well as real world.

Crowdfunding enables to interact with various groups, which helps in expanding your network, providing great visibility by reaching out maximum number of people across globe.

So, are you all set to let your creative juices flow and make your dream a reality?

We suggest you also read:

Ref Links: India's Top 10 Crowdfunding Platforms and Websites

- <https://www.digit.in/internet/best-crowdfunding-websites-in-india-33504.html>
- <https://crowdsourcingweek.com/blog/indias-top-ten-crowdfunding-platforms/>
- <https://www.impactguru.com/blog/creative-crowdfunding-in-india>
- <https://medium.com/@MaximusFiftyTwo/5-crowdfunding-success-stories-in-india-a9e5ef49b763>
- <https://www.impactguru.com/blog/a-complete-guide-to-reward-based-crowdfunding-in-india>

TURBOCHARGE

YOUR MARKETING

Do you need to increase the ROI of your marketing activity? Frankly, who doesn't?

What do you do if you're a busy business owner or entrepreneur and your company is actively marketing itself in a number of ways, including social media, but you don't seem to be getting traction with your target audience? And what do you do if you're not sure how effective your efforts are or whether you're focusing on the right goals?

If this all sounds familiar, help is at hand – take action now with these five tried-and-tested tips for boosting your marketing's ROI.



Marketing expert Mike Pritt suggests five promising tips!!



Networking Strategy

It's great that you're attending networking events, but how structured is your follow-up activity? What evaluation do you carry out afterwards? You should send a quick 'nice to meet you' email within 24 hours of meeting to everyone you had a meaningful conversation with.

Tip – send all your emails out at the same time and then it's easy to assess responsiveness. Two to three months is a good period of time to evaluate whether anything constructive came out of an initial meeting.

Social-Media Training

Your staff know all about social media, don't they? Well, they may do on a personal level, but have you trained them (or yourself, for that matter) to use social media to benefit your business? Have you briefed them on core messages, customer service actions and responses? If not, set up this training as soon as possible.



Youtube

How many videos do you have promoting your expertise in your sector or products/services? YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world behind Google, and it's owned by Google. What does this mean? Create videos for YouTube and you'll rank highly in searches within YouTube and Google. This will massively improve your company's visibility and profile. Video is now so accessible and cost-effective that you should be using it in a structured way. Create videos for YouTube and you'll rank highly in searches within YouTube and Google, massively improving your company's visibility and profile.

Data capture squeeze pages

How robust is your strategy to build your database? Your list will be the foundation of your business. If you don't have one already, create a piece of content that is available for free to people who sign up to your database. For example, a white paper or a market research study will work as a lead magnet, enabling you to build your list more quickly.



Start Blogging Regularly

Your blog will become a platform that you can own completely and you won't need to pay Google or Facebook for the privilege, either...



What I loved about the brand is they hit the right chord between organic and sustainable fashion clothing for men, women and their most popular line for children which also has an adorable name.

"Four Red Bangles"

SUSTAINABLE FASHION REVOLUTION



- Nisha Serai



Here's a confession

Our generations are the ones thrive on fast food, fast fashion it's all about convenience. But have we ever wondered

What kind of impact does this have?

This question made me dig deeper and research to kindle my interest in fast fashion, surprisingly highlighting some eye-opening facts. Fast fashion has not only spoiled our senses in judging what to buy but also what to wear. There are plenty of reasons undoubtedly that the fashion industry is garnering attention as the war against slow and fast fashion is gaining momentum. In the recent tumultuous economic times, who has the commitment of being fashionable and socially responsible too?

Isn't it a struggle in our fast paced lives?



I say no to Fast Fashion, Do you?



But let's spare a thought about the overall impact that the fashion industry has on our planet. It is quite disheartening, while the debate on fashion industry being the second most polluting industry continues, some of the main factors that contribute is the over consumption of fashion items, the use of synthetic fibers, and the agriculture pollution of crops, consumers want more but at cheaper prices. Fuelled by high end demand on the brands the producers also have high pressure to create rapid supply. Put all of this together and what it means is that our choice of clothes creates a massive impact on the planet.

It's time to switch to "Slow Fashion", which is an intersection of ethical, and long lasting fashion. Slow Fashion is not a typical seasonal trend, it is a movement which is here to stay, and it ensures high quality production having timeless designs which never go out of style.

My research drew us closer to this brand Forty Red Bangles the brainchild of Ramona Saboo who is taking gigantic strides in support of this movement. Forty Red Bangles is a socially conscious organisation, moving towards creating a sustainable luxury line of clothing, accessories, handmade toys, handcrafted jewellery and up-cycled home-decor. The name of the brand draws inspiration from the wedding bangles of its founder, which mirrors her journey from Melbourne to Mumbai. What I loved about the brand is they hit the right chord between organic and sustainable fashion clothing for men, women and their most popular line for children which also has an adorable name.

Forty Red Bangles

The company reaches out to local designers and NGOs, enabling undiscovered talent to reach new markets and supporting sustainable community development. Made from pure organic cotton, all natural dyes and sustainably sourced raw materials, each piece is handcrafted by local artisans.

The attractions of fast fashion are undeniably strong, but the proverb "Slow and Steady wins the Race" definitely aligns to the Sustainable Fashion industry. So this time think before heading out for the irresistible deals during a seasonal sale near you, think of the consequences of your choice.

Ramona says Forty Red Bangles is a strong believer of "Source locally and think globally", We create fewer products which are carefully constructed ensuring craftsman get sustained income, but also enhances a dimension of exclusivity in the product.





Ayesha Adlakha

Public Figure

@mtvindia VJ Ayesha

Actor & Anchor.

Scuba Diver. Adventure traveler. Cyclist.

Filmmaker at #50kproductions

'10 minutes' out now : @10minutesfilm

The Insta Story



I think till date one of the biggest problems I faced is that I never know what I want. Although it looks and sounds like I've got everything sorted, planned and am on a mission, but the fact is I am still confused every step of the way. I have always had a problem with knowing what I want.



I don't know if you remember but Jack Sparrow had a compass which use to point at what he desired the most, so that's why I like Jack because I need a compass to show me what I really want. I am still on the journey to understand what I really want.

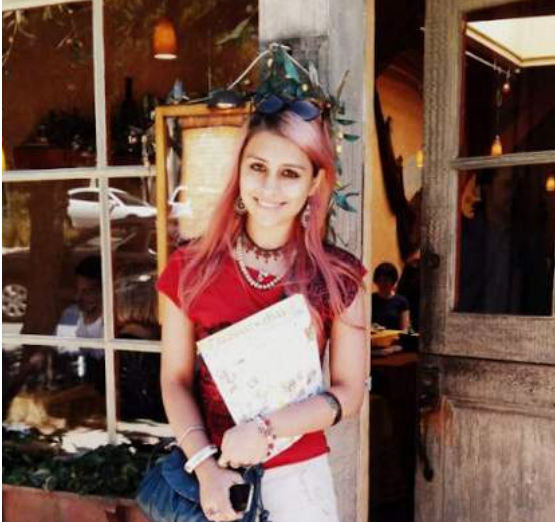


I think money enables you; I started borrowing camera from friends and family while in second year I started shooting events to earn money. I then used the earned money to produce another film or buy a camera, it felt amazing and I was loving being behind the camera. Today everything I have done or achieved is based on what I believe in.



While in school I fell in love with a boy because he was everything that was not the system, he would smoke weird stuff, he would drive without a license... he was a badass boy in class 8th. When you are vulnerable and somebody stands for everything you think is cool, you latch onto that. I did everything under the sun until I was in class 11th.





My parents came to know what I was doing and they got scared and took me to a psychiatrist. I immediately stopped smoking and seeing the boy. The psychiatrist told me something that will always stay with me; he said, "Do you realize that you have killed your brain cells which means that you will never be as smart as your peers" I don't know if it was my ego or self preservation, but I decided to prove him wrong.

I aced my board exams and got into St. Stephens and got every single course that I wanted and proved the psychiatrist wrong, this gave me confidence.

Elena Sparrow on Instagram during this whole time ended up becoming my alter ego, so there were things that Ayesha could never admit or accept but Elena could. I somehow made a distance from being who I really was as a person and who I wanted to be to the outside world that gave me a breathing space to explore different ideas that were in my head.



When I entered college, Instagram was still picking up and I was on it all the time. For me it was a place where I could express myself without getting judged, so it was just me being Elena Sparrow, discovering so many different things. It was more like overcoming things, wanted people to look at me and not feel weird.



I was also a part of the Indie music scene, part of me always believed in art. And art is something that cannot survive without patrons and I knew I wanted a patron, so I wanted to be a patron to others as well. We created a music festival called gig week, once I started doing this I knew I could do it.



Studying philosophy also breaks down your belief system, you start questioning everything you always knew so even the fallible which you thought was perfect. Suddenly something beautiful happened, I didn't have to live my life from what I had seen, I could choose the things I liked. I didn't need validation anymore and created my own belief system, today everything I have done or achieved is based on what I believe in.

Impact of

Siddhi Soi

Personally, it has 2 sides to it, one being I have never let myself be affected by the fact that I am criminal by law. My routine is still the same. The people around me have always been supportive **THANK GOD!** and I never did hide this part of me from anyone (except for parents) since I realized it myself.

But I recently saw my parents becoming a little more open to talk about it. Since I came out to them, we have never spoken about this topic. But in the last week, their willingness to discuss it also shows how they have taken their time but accepted it. I think the law had a big role to play, without the law being on our side, I don't think my parents would have still been as ok as they are now and that's all I really wanted, for people I care about to accept me, now they have!

But nevertheless, it's been **overwhelming**. More than the judgement, the intentions and the statements made by the bench is what really got me teary eyed.



Tanvi Lehr

Things become easier when the law is with you, there's a lot of prejudice around you and you are personally battling that. The recent judgment has taken me a step closer to accept myself. I constantly judged myself for who I am at the same time there was a battle going on in the outside world. A lot of fear that I had earlier has converted into doing something valuable with myself.

Earlier I had a fear of speaking of giving my opinion, I had strong view points but they were all in my head, didn't know how to share it openly, now I can. Recently I have accepted myself as a queer girl & I feel empowered. People coming together as a community is very powerful.

As Lenon said 'There's fear and love' when you are fearful it pulls you away from life and when you're in love you want to grow take on life with excitement, passion and want to give so much of yourself. This recent judgment has set me free to love, to grow and to live....



Section 377

Vagda Galhotra

Justice Malhotra's "*History owes an apology to the members of this [LGBTQIA] community*" was symbolic of a historic feat. It sent shivers down my spine. Not just as a lawyer favoring decriminalization in general, but as a supporter of individual rights, liberties and of the community, I was elated, infact we all were.

The judgment decriminalizes consensual same sex relations which constituted a penal offence under our age old penal code. India finally took a step in the direction becoming a progressive nation. A moment of euphoria. So heart-warming to witness the world celebrating our progress.

However, it is too early to gauge the impact of the judgment. It is definitely a step in the right direction but it is equally important to understand that society is not the same thing as law. The judgment doesn't ensure that the society will treat members of a largely oppressed community with any more respect. There is much to be done both as society and legal level. The society has to fight stigma and discrimination faced by members of the community. The law needs to recognize same sex cohabitation and the rights and duties that arise out of such cohabitation.

Justice Chandrachud has signalled that the law will take that course, which gives us hope for more progress in the future. It is a long road ahead and we have just passed our first milestone. Expecting it to be an enthralling celebration, we are now waiting for this year's queer pride march.



Lauren Robinson

The verdict was extremely **powerful** for me, it has made me feel more confident and love myself a little bit more. Knowing that such conversation is encouraged around us after the ruling is very empowering. Now I hear a lot more people speaking about it and are more aware about LGBTQ. It has given me the courage to share with the world who I am and it is no more looked down upon by the law.

I can express love for my girlfriend more openly; nobody is going to put me behind bars for that anymore. I feel extremely fortunate to be a part of this community and the ruling has brought me closer to myself. I am at liberty to share my life and stories I want to share in order to help people understand the community better, because these stories are about peoples lives and lives matter and these are stories that we need to tell.....

Meet *the* Team



Neha Chatterjee

My inspiration from Wopreneur comes knowing that financial empowerment makes a woman more confident and she finds her voice. As Babu said 'Be the change you want to see' hence Wopreneur is an effort to change the mindset about issues that effect women at large. As a team our aim is to create an ecosystem of support for women to help them realize their potential



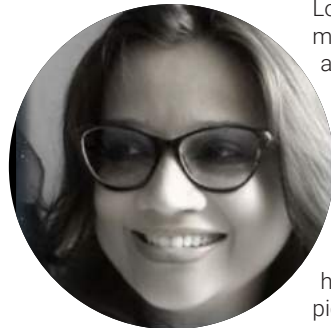
Meenakshi Pathak

As Rumi says "What you seek is seeking you" is so true when we see life in its entirety. During the years while working on big projects in corporate space something was missing. With stirring questions within me I was asking life the work I am here to do. The power of a genuine question was quite powerful and there I met Wopreneur as an answer, having the vision to co-create a support system with other women towards financial abundance, having our own independence. So here I am with my presence to offer my essence to Wopreneur.



Nisha Serai

At first I thought no way how could I ever write for a magazine, 10 years of accomplished corporate career and now devoting my time to motherhood. My meeting with Wopreneur was liberating, the concept definitely seemed to be refreshing and I am glad to be associated with this phenomenal medium of being part of something with meaning. Past few months have been an amazing journey to sense what I can do and where am I going, an opportunity to hone my strengths and interact with some fabulous people. A passionate entrepreneur and a budding writer, hope my writing inspires women to find their own voice. Happy Reading.



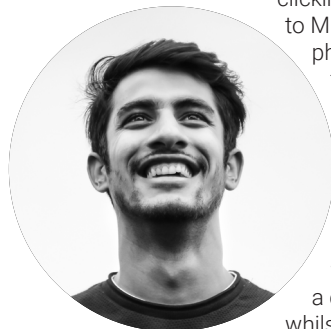
Rashi Bunny

Love of words, how they taste in my mouth, how they dance on my skin as I utter them on the stage or type them on a page... words have the power to swing from sacred to sacrilege and words can heal, inspire & transform...this EXPERIENCE turned me into a writer a long time ago. Wopreneur is set out to redefine how women in India think, and so I pick my pen again on this journey of collaborative, creative, celebration of A community coming together!



Preeti Mahajan

I've always believed in doing the impossible. Someone says no, and I think why not? From riding bikes to becoming a textile designer who started making websites, I think it's always helped me to keep believing in the biggest dreams. After working for four years in the fashion industry, I passionately run a design studio where every day is a new adventure and opportunity to endless learning. Being associated with Wopreneur gives me the opportunity to co-create something of value.



Sajal Kapoor

As a child, I learned composition and aesthetics from my father who loved clicking my pictures. After moving to Mumbai, I pursued my love for photography and cinematography, thereafter trained with professional photographers and film production houses. In 2015, I started Epiphany, my company. Being an avid traveller, I am always keen on promoting travel photography and blogs. Working with Wopreneur has allowed me a chance to meet inspiring minds whilst becoming part of a great team doing some really fabulous work. This has also given me a gateway to contribute to a project that is fully aimed at building a better community.



Varsha Rao

I've always been spontaneous with my decision making and have led life by the will of ideas and Inspirations. Having ended up in design school with no inclination towards fashion, I swung towards graphic design and started working for a kidswear brand after completing my Master's degree from London College of Fashion. Two years later, my teammate (now Co-founder) and I both quit together, with a dramatic exit and set off to lay the foundation of our design studio – Project 1.6. There are some things that one should never give up on – Dreams and Ideas. I Am glad to be associated with Wopreneur as we tread towards creating something unique for the community.



Maytri Soni

Growing up in an Indian family means you are restricted with your dreams. I believe in doing out of the box things and to do that you need to go an extra mile. From being a management student to a Junior graphic designer at Project 1.6 it was a roll-a-coaster ride. But when you have a goal and the courage to achieve it no one can stop you from it. Wopreneur inspires me to keep dreaming big and do things out of your willingness, doing things you want to do.

If You Have Views On

#Consent

#Gender Bias

#Challenges

#FinancialEmpowerment

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