



## International Case Study

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# What is the creative economy?

## Leona Thrift-ola – Indie Roller

Margate, Kent, UK

Indie Roller is a fun-zone for independent business owners in the creative industries. Founder Leona and her team offer training, community, coaching and selling opportunities within a super fun membership community. The Indie Roller motto is #collaborationovercomparison supporting members to overcome imposter syndrome and make money from the creative ideas in their heads in a positive and uplifting online community.



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Leona Thrift-old is a creative polymath entrepreneur. She has a long track record in building creative businesses from starting out making jewellery, having a stall at Portobello Market, London and launching her first business Lady Lucky Rules Ok in 2003. She has been a product designer with her products being sold across the world, in the V&A and worked for Wayne Hemmingway. She launched Lucky Dip Club in 2014; a globally successful subscription box service championing creative makers. In the last five years she has been developing a range of Indie Roller membership support services for creatives including coaching, masterminds, and festive showcases. Born in the UK, living and working in Margate, Kent, UK.

### **What sort of creative entrepreneur are you?**

I am an internet based and community entrepreneur. I am a business coach and mentor

### **What do you consider to be the creative industries?**

For me it is about making money from the ideas in my head, it can take any form, essentially it is your ideas and your own unique viewpoint on the world, Your values, everything that makes you, you. It is joy and how you apply it to the world. In business you are offering this out to be related to and consumed by a certain audience.

### **How do you see yourself within the creative industries?**

I am very much a part of the creative industries; it has embedded into me as a way of being. I am always evolving, and authentic with this. I am adapting, into human growth and I want to pass this on and deeply make a difference. For a long time, it was about my own self exploration, figuring out my own identify. I am now in a giving back phase, having been on my own heroes' journey and coming back to share what I know. I have learnt it is vital to allow yourself to go on your own personal journey and that this will be alongside your own business development journey.

### **How do you relate what you do to your values?**

They are completely aligned now; it took a while. Truth, freedom, and fun are my own values, I have re-connected and having shifted a tiny bit with them over the last five years. I review these when I am making decisions within my business – then each decision comes from this place of my values. It is actually one of my favourite parts of running Indie Roller. Members say they have “ah ha” moments when they are working on what the values are in their business. How often to people stop and ask, “what is important to me?”. We are not taught this as school. The first module in the Indie Roller course is to connect and re-align with personal values. It is key to think about setting up the type of business you want to run, and how to make decisions for your business linked to your values.

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### **What made you set up initially?**

It was through resourcefulness, due to a very personal reason and decision to leave home at a young age. I did not finish school so I probably did not have preconceptions of what I could or could not do. I moved to London and did lots of jobs to build up my experience. I linked working with fun for me, links back to my values, as I had grown up around people who didn't like work and I wanted something different for myself.

### **What is your business model?**

I run a subscription business, recurring revenue since 2014 since Lucky Dip Club and I would not want it any other way.

### **What is the “indieconomy”?**

It is an idea of different types of different types of economy i.e., investing time and money into different ways of consuming. This is linked to shop small, a silver lining in the pandemic. I am not a fan of 'small' I do not like to label it with a size. I am into supporting the independent maker as it is about freedom, independence. By not having boards of directors indie business owners can make decisions that are more linked and aligned to their values, not just for profit. It is becoming more of the consumer facing way I will help my clients find ways to gain more clients and boost their growth, their way. Indie Roller is a business to business (B2B) operation, and we help people do cashflow, values and growth. During the pandemic I found I could help my members do the more with the forward-facing ways of doing business i.e. selling. This came about because I am always keeping an eye on the opportunities for the business to grow into i.e., circumstances like the pandemic or seasonal needs. I see what I do as an experiment to see what happens. I love selling and marketing and I am excited to see where it goes this year.

### **How do you work with other forms of and international cultural economies?**

We are global because of social media, but because I am based in the UK and especially because of Brexit it has ended up with 95% of the members being based in the UK. I would never say I am just in the UK. I have members in Australia who love the community, even with the time differences for the workshops we run. The numbers are small and down the line I am considering how to discover where the indie rollers are in different countries and working together with them to make a directory, to find the coaching and business support within their own communities. I would want it to be relevant in the communities where they are, smaller communities online are powerful. Keeping it local and relevant will make the bigger difference to their businesses.

### **How do you relate your work, if at all, to UK cultural policy? Funding?**

I do not really go after funding; I am a private business not CIC (Community Interest Company). It is not within our business model.

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## Looking back what advice would you give to anyone when starting up?

- ✚ Go for it!
- ✚ Google term 'inner critic' - we all have an inner monologue that is saying stuff to us. Learn about this as we all have this and realise you are not alone
- ✚ Mindset is so key, and it no longer filed under the "woo woo" category any more. Mindset management is a life skill and it actually will help you get started in your business.

Company Website [indieroller.com/](http://indieroller.com/)

Company Instagram [@indie\\_roller](https://www.instagram.com/indie_roller)

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