

CASE STUDY:

INTERATIONAL CREATIVE WOMEN

Please introduce yourself and your business

We are Sally Ocana and Yolima Grandas, founders of International Creative Women.

ICW is a social entrepreneurship organization created to inspire and support international women to start and grow their own businesses.

Our aim is to welcome and bring together women with business initiatives and to create spaces for training and promotion. Through our network, we have created a support system that is not only useful for their development on a professional and economic level, but also on an emotional and social level, and with that, facilitates the process of integration in the Netherlands.

Why did you decide to create your business?

Our business was created to solve problems we were experiencing ourselves. When we arrived to the Netherlands we wanted to start a business but we faced multiple challenges, not only as female entrepreneurs, but as foreigners.

Language and socio cultural barriers, lack of support network, lack of knowledge, fear of new laws were the main barriers.

We decided we had to do something about it. We decided to create a community where international women like us can find information, support and guidance.

What motivates you to continue your business?

We get motivated every day!! More women arrive to our city every day and we love to see when a woman can pursue her dreams. We get motivated every time we see the progress of her brand, how she improves her marketing or simply how she gains confidence and security in talking about herself.

When you were developing your business story what did you want to portray to the public?

We wanted to create a deeper connection with our "clients", stroke human emotions and show that despite all the barriers, it is possible to do what you love to do, it is possible to pursue your dreams and we can help them to make it easier.. together.

How did you achieve this?

Using our personal stories, a very honest story about our journey as entrepreneurs in a new country, and with the time we got to tell stories about how people's lives are impacted since we started.

We used storytelling and co-creation to build our community. And we use our community to tell more stories.

We shared our story not only online but in person. When people visit our physical shop, they know the stories of the maker behind the product they are buying.

When companies hired our services (creative workshops) or buy our products (Christmas gift boxes) they get to know our story and the story of the brands involved.

We have created a strong community that doesn't belong to one or two women. ICW is a name that represents many, many women.

How do you ensure that your business story reaches a wide audience?

We use every channel from our website and social media, our product packaging, our physical shop and events to not only tell our story but to add life to it.

But more importantly, every member of our community is a storyteller of ICW, even the partners, They can tell our story, the brand story, their own story, they all are connected and they are all real, humanly mindful.

Why is storytelling important to you?

It allow us to communicate clearly and efficiently with our clients, not only the members but with the companies buying our services and products, and with different organizations in the country.

We wanted to create a deep connection, a strong community and storytelling along with co-creation were the ideal tools to achieve it.

What do you think are the most important things to consider regarding storytelling?

You need to know the audience first, and then have clarity over the story. What is the main message you want to convey and built your story around it.

For us, it was very important to trigger emotions, so as a good movie, our story has different parts: drama, thrill, fun, happy endings, sadness, we embrace them all.

What advice would give female artists/ creative business owners?

Dig deeper to find the real reasons behind your business, why you started, what problems you want to solve and then create a honest story that resonates with your client.

