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The Studio



## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to take what I have learned from my time in the Honors College at Oklahoma State University and marry it with my college experience ultimately developing a feasible business model, which tends to the needs of a large target market that has a small voice. I will address the process and projects I have developed on the way to this final project. Following this I will discuss my personal life and how that, in part, inspired me to create this business model. I will follow that with a written representation of the Barringer-Ireland Business Model. Finally I will conclude my paper with a vision and sense of importance while looking at this business on a worldwide necessity.

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## **I. Overview**

Combining a variety of interests, courses I have taken, and life experiences that have coincided with my college years, I have arrived at a business idea with which I am very satisfied. The story behind this business is extremely important and pertinent to business itself. The following is the story of the creation of my idea and then a business model of what will be The Studio: a community of survivors coming together to discover and cultivate passions to help provide support and heal the effects of trauma.

### **Freshman and Sophomore Year**

Coming into Oklahoma State University I had what I thought was a solid idea for a piano-bar style café. I cultivated this idea in several of my entrepreneurship classes. The idea for this came from my violin. I have been playing since the fourth grade and had never had a chance to actually perform solo. Being under twenty-one in Oklahoma, I could not play in any bars. I decided a good business is needed to fix this age-talent-performance gap for me and other artists. I expanded the original “other musicians” to “other artists” because I figured: Why stop at music? There is so much talent in a college town and much of it goes unseen. I thought that this café - as I love coffee paninis, and pastries as much as any young student - could be a Mecca for the creative, young spirit. This café would feature art from local artists as well as be an open-mic platform for those in the performance arts.

I thought this café could essentially be an artistic and better version of Panera, in a sense. It would serve similar food choices and feature crafted coffees as well as a variety of teas. I hoped to bring a little of my European heritage into the café, and also provide crepes and traditional German desserts. I wanted it to have a rustic, almost antique shop feel - like that of the restaurant Eggspectations. I really liked the Edison-bulb and exposed brick aesthetic, so I was hoping to bring that feel into this café. I was thinking of using an old, converted house for the real estate. I liked the idea of having a separate back kitchen, a full display area, and then plenty of seating room and room to feature the art.

As a separate idea I had thought of creating an entertainment multi-plex of sorts. This idea started with the closing of the after-school hang out place in Owasso where I attended junior high. It did not have an official name; but it was a decent sized building with pool tables, air hockey, video games, and a few arcade games. It to be where middle and high school students hung out after school as a fun and safe alternative to the plethora of troubles that young students could be doing otherwise. I thought applying this arcade-style locale to Stillwater would be fantastic. Students under twenty-one only had Kiko's Hookah Lounge to frequent and that was not in everyone's tastes. We young students wanted entertainment. I thought more than basic arcade games, a snack bar, and beanbag chairs I could expand the locale to include even putt-putt golf and laser tag. I was extremely excited about this idea, but was aware that the scale I wanted to make it on would be at least a million dollar project so I kept my focus on the piano-café.

## Junior and Senior Year

I had two main business ideas over the latter half of my stay at Oklahoma State University. The first being a pole dance studio and the second being a bar in Owasso. The pole dance studio came to me when I could not find one in Stillwater. I was surprised a college town did not have one. I was looking for a new flavor of workout, but I know that birthday and bachelorette parties also draw in large crowds to such establishments. I had been going to a studio in Oklahoma City that featured not only pole dance but aerial silks and hoop dance as well. I fell in love with the sport and gained much confidence knowing how much stronger I was getting.

I was also very pleased with the pole community. They were all fun, strong women who embraced their art and gave no regard to the negative stripper-stereotypes that usually coexist with such an activity. I was impressed with the establishment but found many areas in which it was lacking; that I felt I could capitalize upon. For example, they had great equipment and adequate floor space but there was nowhere to purchase sport items such as grip gear or fun items such as heels. There were no parallel products available. There were also no day classes. Now, given that this studio is in the Midtown area of Bricktown, having classes after a normal workday made sense, but I thought that if one existed in Stillwater it could definitely host day classes catering to college students' flexible schedules and at-home-moms looking for ways to work out while the children are at school.



More than a small studio I wanted to create a dance empire. I wanted to have a boutique room that would sell work out gear, grip gear, reliable home poles, fun outfits, and heels. I wanted to also host classes such as aerial silks, lyra hoop, hoop dance, yoga, and even self-defense. I wanted to focus on empowerment and “taking sexy back.” I wanted this studio to break stereotypes. I wanted this to be Stillwater’s premier women’s dance facility and then spread to other college towns. The only direct competition would be the few classes a week that are taught out of the Blue Diamond Cabaret but their business is not set up for actually teaching pole exercise and dance.

The second idea I had was more of a family idea. My family lives in Owasso and there are no bars aside from those in restaurants. My father has always wanted to open a nano- or microbrewery. I took on a bartending job almost as soon as I turned twenty-one. We thought about combining these characteristics with my mother’s German cooking skills and my brother’s outstanding charisma and create a family business. Since it would be in Owasso we thought about calling it The Ram’s Head Lounge. It would be positioned on the main thoroughfare from Owasso to downtown Tulsa; an overlook on West 86<sup>th</sup> Street headed outbound toward 75. It would offer a simple blue-collar atmosphere with a rustic European touch of class. It would not have full meals but some appetizer and tapas-style plates. My father would stock the bar with Made-In-Oklahoma beers as well as standard domestic favorites. I would be a bartender though I suggested hiring a trained mixologist to develop the recipes for cocktails. We were going to fill a void in a growing town.

## Senior Victory Lap: Surveying Possibilities

During my senior year I joined a new sorority on campus. This radical decision was in effort to push myself out of my comfort zone as well as try to use this pool of people to network. Greek life is not for me but I am still sticking it out. Over the summer we were given a list of outfits we needed to have ready and matching for rush week, which I was not going to be in town for thankfully. However, I did notice that the dresses were so specific that I did not even see them in stores over the summer. These dresses were described down to the Crayola shade, cut, and fabric type. I saw dresses at boutiques that fit the parameters for the requirements, but they fit no budget of mine.

This is when I came up with the idea for an Internet based custom dress company. This company would start with ten basic silhouettes in basic colors and their pastel and darker variations. I would fix a base price of \$40 per dress. From here, the dresses would be completely customizable. Since sewing has been a hobby of mine I understand the basics of how to make a pattern, and I would make these patterns “agree with each other” so that creating variations would be an easy process. These variations would include patterned fabric, altered hem lines and shapes, an added layer of chiffon, sleeves in varying lengths, and so on for an upcharge. The dresses would essentially be completely customizable so that the girl who wants the unique boutique dress could spend the money and get it, while the working girl on a budget, like me, could afford to fulfill the intensely detailed specifications. There would also be group deals and design options for – as a few examples – an entire sorority, club, church group, or bridesmaid’s team wanted matching outfits.

More than helping the budget shopper this company would utilize its community. Just like the company Lolly Wolly Doodle, I would hire and train people needing jobs in the Oklahoma City community to make these dresses as well as pay them above minimum wage and offer day care services. I would want to make this work for the community as much as the clients. I would also employ the Dan Ariely technique of “check the box if you want to decline this” applied to a rounding up factor that would round up the sale price to the nearest dollar amount and donate it to the community in some way.

The second idea I had this semester was that of a crepe truck. Food trucks are ever gaining popularity, and with the advent of social media it is easier to reach customers with information changing from current location to weekly specials. I chose crepes as my specialty for three main reasons: I am good at and like making crepes; there is low variable overhead; and there is only one other crepe truck in Oklahoma as direct competition. This truck would serve sweet and savory crepes as well as “naked crepes;” parfaits. It would also serve a handful of coffees and teas. Ideally, its ingredients would come from local farmers and farmers’ markets. Again, in trying to support the community and encourage mutual business. This truck and menu could, with effort, translate to a brick and mortar store and incorporate some of the aforementioned café environment.

The third idea I had this semester was that of a recording studio. Stillwater is full of untapped, young talent. To accommodate this, only two recording studios exist in town and they are good but not great. Red Dirt Records would address these two points. It would be Stillwater’s premier recording studio with top of the line equipment, instruments, and

software. I am friends with several of the more popular local red dirt acts, and would take their input into what such a studio would need. The only problem with this is that the overhead for such a professional studio is enormous. The real estate would again be a converted house. Each room would be set up to capture a specific sound. There would be one large room for full band recordings. The kitchen would of course keep its integrity and there would be a room specifically for mixing and computer work. There would also be a green room for inspiration and waiting between sets.

### **The Simple Idea**

I decided to take a step back from these demanding and costly endeavors and decided to assess what I like and wanted. I like small businesses. I like a sense of community. I love low overhead. I liked dancing very much and was good at it. I like crafting and creating something new. I thought I could simply be an independent contractor for hoop dance and workouts. There are several companies I could partner with and get an official certification from that would also supply teaching aids. Basic hoops are easy to make and cost under \$10 each to make, unless there is a lot of decorative tape added to them. This would combine my love of crafting and dance as well as teaching, which is something I have always enjoyed doing. However, this idea is too simple. It is not scalable, unless I were to start a hoop studio. I could probably merge with a local yoga studio in town if I wanted to stay local but I would have a larger market doing this in Tulsa or Oklahoma City.

## Personal Life

I have taken a plethora of courses during my stay at Oklahoma State University between switching the details of my majors and minors quite a few times. I have learned from all of these. However, my greatest lessons were learned outside of the classroom. I had to learn the hard way what it means to get back up when you are knocked down as well as learning about and trusting in myself.

The summer before my sophomore year, I was raped and abused by someone I considered I good friend for an entire month. This took a huge toll on my body, mind, and spirit. Feelings of confusion, dissonance, shame, and disgust clouded my life and bled into not just my personal life but also my schoolwork even after I started telling people about it and seeking help. I completely lost myself and would not let anyone in; I was drowning and turned to self-mutilation, drugs, and drinking. I felt worthless. I was a victim and did nothing to change that, which only invited in more abusive relationships culminating in date rape over this past summer when I decided, "Enough is Enough!" and stopped being a victim and became a survivor.

I relate this not seeking any pity but understanding. I eventually reached out to a few people for support but found even less support. My friends felt I had brought this on myself in many ways. My father wanted to disown me for reasons I do not fully understand. My mother was torn between my father, brother, and myself. The rest of my family lives in Oregon and had no say in the matter.

Yet, despite all of this, I am fortunate. I found the strength to pull myself back up. I pulled up my grades. I finally found the strength to say that, "Enough is Enough!" I found the strength to sober up; I do not want anyone ever again say I put myself in a situation that was "asking for it." A small handful of friends stood by me, but that was not enough.

I am fortunate; I am a rare case. So many victims do not find the strength to pull themselves up or to keep going. Some find absolutely no support. Some girls have gotten pregnant and had children from this. Some people cannot go to family reunions because the perpetrator was a relative; some of these people are still forced to go. So many people who have had it worse than me. For a long time I felt bad talking about my experiences, because I know that all too many people, of all genders and sexes, have been through worse. However, I have finally found the strength and the self-worth to say, "I may not be everyone, but I am not the only one." My story has worth because I have worth. My voice will be heard; I will not be silent any longer. This is a part of my life that may never fade away. It is a part of my life that was damaged, yes, but now I can say that my life is "altered" and "changed," not "damaged." The abuse I endured is a facet of my life. However, it will not define my life; I am more than my story.

### **What does this have to do with business?**

I want to change the world. Yes, making money will be very nice - especially a lot of money. However, I want to make a better world. I want to teach about these things. I want to study

them, increase awareness, and prevent these horrific tragedies from happening. However, the “rape culture” wherein we live is thousands of years in the making, a global endemic, and cannot be obliterated overnight. So what is there to do in the meantime? Help those I can help. I can create a safe haven for girls like me. I felt so alone going through all of this for what felt like forever; it took over a year to find a counselor I got along with for starters. As I mentioned, my family was not there for me, and my boyfriend did not know how to handle what I was going through. I do not want anyone else to be or feel that lonely, hopeless, and helpless.

As nice as I think the aforementioned businesses are, this is my passion.

The past cannot be erased but the future can be made better. This atrocity hurt not only me; but my friendships, my family, my schooling, and my work. I want to ease this traumatic effect for others. I want to be there when no one was there for me. If I cannot directly help, then I want to help find someone who can.

We all heal at different rates and in different ways. I was fortunate to even find a counselor and scrounge up the \$100 she charges per hour. What helped me more than this counselor was to look within myself. I rekindled a passion for music and picked up the guitar and cello. I started reading again. I started writing again. All of these helped me – but I still had to go it alone. I had to teach myself to call myself a “survivor” and not a “victim.” Oklahoma State University claims it has a good system to help deal with such trauma, but it is lacking. The “1 is 2 many” campaign is not enough. There is too much red tape to start an

organization like TWLOHA on campus. This leaves a large chasm between young people who need help the most as they are still developing and real resources, real support they desperately need are too expensive for them to use.

### **Competitor: Why not Wings of Hope?**

Once I found the strength within myself to seek help I was faced with the question of where to go. As I mentioned I still work with a counselor out of Tulsa, but it took a lot of searching to find not just her but anyone who could help me. I did not mesh well with the counselors at OSU. I remember one counselor wanted to get involved personally and said something to the effect of, "I wish I could do something, really do something, to help you and get you justice in whatever way that may be." Where this was a nice sentiment, getting attached to my story and me - letting me cry - did not help me move forward. Another counselor wanted to focus on the "drama" in my life instead of working with the real issue of what had happened to me. I found some support online but I wanted something in person.

I found a Wings of Hope branch in Stillwater but I did not want to go there. The tagline on Google for Wings of Hope is "Domestic Abuse Treatment Center." I had thought that this was not for me. Whenever I had heard of Wings of Hope I thought of an organization with its roots in religion that helped families. I was not in an abusive relationship with my boyfriend, in my mind. I had no children. I was not seeking sanctuary from an abusive husband. I did not feel worthy to even step inside the facility. I had thought that there were



other women who needed the attention more than me. I felt like I would not fit in; that this was a wonderful facility but not for me.

So many young adults and teenagers go through horrible and traumatic experiences – we feel lost and alone. Reaching out was the most difficult step I had to take in my healing process. I want to make this step easier for young adults in this and other communities.

### **Inspiration**

Though I was practically alone in Stillwater I was not totally alone. I found solace in two projects: Project Unbreakable and The Unslut Project. These two organizations acted as platforms for those who had suffered abuse to speak out and be inspirational in their survival. It was very comforting to know that I was not alone. I was able to read stories relatable to mine, and know that I could get through this, too. As wonderful as these resources still are for me, there is a problem with them: they focus on the problem and not a solution. It is wonderful to share stories but very little is done about them. Now, both of these projects do have touring speaking engagements; but there is more an emphasis on “victim” than “survivor.” More needs to be done for the “survivor.”

My mother volunteers at the Air Force Base whereat my father works. She helps at a facility called The Coffee Bunker. This is a detox, recuperate, and relax zone. It is where veterans take a time out - take a break from life whether on or off base or active, reserve, or discharged. Here the veterans connect, share stories, lean on each other, and get help when

needed. The bunker is stocked with pool tables and video game systems. Rooms are set aside for uses such as counseling or massages when someone outside volunteers to share their services. Sessions are offered in fields such as resume writing and meditation. The Coffee Bunker is a safe haven for veterans. They know they each have a story and that there is no judgment in this area. They feel secure and supported with their brothers and sisters at arms. It has proven very effective and has helped change many lives. This is the support system that these brave men and women need; there is no shame in seeking help and The Coffee Bunker provides just that.

### **The Logo: Symbolism of the Orchid**

I had been toying with names revolving around rebirth, creation, and the phoenix for several of my other business ideas. I went through a gauntlet and came out a changed and stronger person; I am more connected to who I am and to what I really feel matters in this life. I am stronger; I barely recognize myself looking back.

With this fire in mind, a few months ago I was dead set on the name of any future business incorporating the phoenix, but then something interesting happened. I was given an orchid plant by one of my abusers. It was difficult to tend to the plant but I managed. Eventually, my cat knocked the plant over and killed it. If it were any other plant I probably would have thrown it away but orchids are my mother's favorite flowers so the plant held a special place in my heart. It took months over which I was doing my own healing for the orchid to grow again. I was extremely surprised that it did. Not only did it grow back, but only one of

the traditional two stems grew. However, though not the same, it grew back more vibrant and colorful. The blooms were larger, more full of life. The orchid has a perfect symbol for this endeavor. It symbolizes how someone can come from a bad place, be stripped of all they are to the point of near death but then, with a little love, be brought back even more vibrant than ever.

### **The Studio: Revised**

I took a step back and assessed the options I had created for myself. I had in depth plans for some and passions for others but nothing was working. That is until I thought of The Studio: it has aspects that draw from all of my previous business ideas. The Studio's mission is to inspire survivors to discover themselves and heal through their passions in a safe, supportive, nurturing environment and community. We will focus on the "survivor" and not the "victim." I am aware: people deal with trauma and heal in different ways and at different rates but what helped me most was finding the will, the desire, to want to heal and then connecting to my counselor so that I could grow. Only then did I rekindle my passion for music and in so doing found a new passion for life. I will supply as much of this as possible to the young women I will help. I will provide them with an online community of healing so that they know they are not alone in their fight and there are others fighting for them. I will encourage these girls to follow their passions, cultivate them, and use them as tools to show themselves as well as the world how strong, powerful, and beautiful they are. Here the real estate comes into play. I will convert a house or old business wherein

each room will hold a different medium for the girls to express themselves and work on projects. I will further discuss this in *Phase Two*.

It is important to me that this endeavor is as organic and humble as possible. All too often people who have not experienced what we have try to reach into our world – many times they try to bring Jesus with them; religious ideology and assistance is far from what we need. Oklahoma does have a very strong religious presence but in dark, traumatic times people often echo the thought that God has abandoned them. I have talked with other survivors who have echoed the notion: If I am worthless in my corporeal life then I am even more so in the eyes of the Lord for I have failed Him and myself. We are in a place, after such trauma, that we need to feel human again and that is the most important need we need fulfilled. Some people do find solace in religion but religion is not the answer for everyone.

We are tired of people telling us what to do and how to heal; especially in their safe, ivory towers. Coming from a place of humility and understanding, saying that it is okay to not be perfect, is very important to us. Often, we feel like scum of the earth and having a person who has led a privileged life telling us how to be better is like a slap in the face – it further reinforces that we are broken and need help, that something is innately wrong with us. Being humble and organic is a very important pillar in our system. These characteristics will stay with us as we grow; they help us to be welcoming and inviting. In being approachable we will be able to welcome more people and in turn be able to help more people. We are working with young women who need their basic needs met and creating a

warm environment that, when used to its fullest potential, could lead to working through Maslow's hierarchy.

Until recently I had called this "The Orchid Project." As much as I like that name, it is used by a U.K. organization that is fighting to stop female genital mutilation. I could not use the name. I still want to use to symbolism of the orchid very much but I knew I had to come up with a new name. After much brainstorming I decided to take a step back. I like to keep things as simple as possible even though they may end up becoming complicated. I remembered the name of a previous business I had thought of: The Studio. I thought it would be perfect to transfer the name as this multimedia facility is basically one huge studio and place to showcase growth. The word "studio" applies to a spectrum of creative mediums. I thought this was a perfect new name for this venture.

This project will go through two main phases followed by a third large expansion phase. First, we will build a public and private online community linked using a webpage and a social media aspect. Second we will transform a brick and mortar locale. The expansion phase will encompass a scholarship component, inclusion of all sexes and genders to the locale, and outreach to other college towns across the nation. For the purpose of this project I will focus on the first two phases in more detail as expansion efforts rely on those being established.

## **Phase One: Online Studio**

The initial stage of The Studio will set up the grounds for the organization. As the Internet is a well-known medium wherein people can remain anonymous if they so choose; I will use that anonymity to its full advantage. I will create a website for young adults who want to connect with each other.

Only a small part of the website will be public. These public pages include the homepage, the about-the-organization section, about me section, a running newsfeed that connects with social media, the store with links to Etsy and other partner websites, a donation page secured by PayPal, a contact page, a page with resources for external help, and then some stories published with permission of our members to highlight the problems The Studio is remediating. A member sign-in link at the top of the page will redirect signed up members to the online community.

The member community will cater to all sexes and genders. It will be reminiscent of Facebook – for its profile page – and Tumblr and Deviantart – for their dashboard and sharing abilities. Profile pages will have the ability to remain an anonymous as possible, not even displaying the member’s name if he or she desires. There will be an option in settings to be able to block a certain sex from seeing one’s posts as well as the ability to block posts of a certain sex from appearing on one’s dashboard. A third option will be to share one’s post with the main, public website. These posts will appear under the “stories” tab on the public website.

My mother says, "It is not what has happened that matters but what you do with it." As healing as it is to share one's story, it is very important for our members to focus on healing instead of complaining. Everyone's story has value, worth, and the right to be heard. However, nothing will get done and no one will heal if everyone sits around complaining. On both the public and private website we will promote healing and a survivor mentality. Our member will be encouraged to post pictures of art they have created, poetry they have written, music they have recorded, and anything else they are passionate about that makes them feel strong, good about living and moving forward, and being a survivor. We want them to feel passion in what they do in their lives and to have the ability to share that with others. It is very therapeutic to be acknowledged by others; if others see your worth then you are more likely to feel worthy yourself. This is akin to being young and having artwork put on the refrigerator; a little recognition goes a long way. I will do all I can to promote this sense of community and support. This community will be a judgment-free zone; a safe have in-and-of itself. The goal here is to have so many loving and supportive voices that it will be impossible to feel alone.

### **Phase Two: Growing**

In this is the phase capital becomes very important. Once an online community has shown interest, real estate will be found. Again, it will be a house, or a large welcoming preexisting building if that is more readily available, with many rooms. At first we will have set operation hours, but upon gradual growth we will be able to operate 24/7. I imagine

employing a key fob system for regular members that can operate at a low fee. Our primary location will initially only allow female members. Statistically, more young women are abused by young men than any other configuration. I recognize that young men can also be victims of both men and women just as I recognize that young women can be hurt by other women. I will not be able to cater to all demographics upon launching and I need to pick my battles; reaching out to the group that statistically could benefit the most makes the most sense to me. If I find enough need, and enough support, I will expand and provide a male facility sooner than the expansion plan I have in mind.

Each room will house a different medium meant for discovery, cultivation, and expression of passion and of self. Comfortable, squishy couches and warm afghans and throws will fill a living room space that will also be equipped with a TV, Netflix, and video games. The kitchen will be fully functional for any who are culinary experts or just want to bake cookies. We will provide a room with instruments and recording equipment. A mixed media room for 3D art can stand next to a large painting and drawing space. A dance room with hardwood floors and full mirrors will also house yoga mats, yoga silks, and hoops to inspire out young women to move. A meditation room with crystals, mandalas, and comfortable seating will provide a relaxing environment. A mentor assisted area with kickboxing, martial arts, and self-defense equipment will provide guidance as well as a healthy medium to let out aggression. A library filled with all kinds of books and journals will cater to those who wish to relax with a story or write their own.



Whatever medium the girls need or want, we will strive to provide Expression of self is such an incredibly powerful tool. To express oneself, to be heard, to be acknowledged carries an even greater power. Central to The Studio: young women find their passions and express themselves through their desired medium. It is healing to find meaning in something one cares about, and that can provide of tangible affirmation. This means the young women can see the progress they are making on a project, and that yields a sense of pride and accomplishment. These young women will be taking back things they love, or maybe even find it for the first time. They will create something all their own and work together to realize their potential. The locale will serve as an incubator to cultivate these ideas and projects. In this safe, nonjudgmental place, the young women will try new ideas; a total creative outlet.

One aspect I wish to eventually incorporate is that of Safe Place. I want The Studio to be Safe Place certified. This is important to me because I want to be able to reach out to the community at large and show them, no matter what they are going through, that healing is possible and that there are people and organizations that actually do care about young lives.

### **The Gallery**

Another facet to this brick and mortar locale will be The Gallery; an exhibit area later purchased adjacent to or expanded upon the original locale. In this gallery, our young women can display finished projects, perform with instruments, read poetry or essays, or

find other ways to present themselves. This component will be a part of our revenue stream as it will be open to the general public and we can charge an admission fee as well as house a small gift shop that will sell prints and replicas of the featured work – naturally, with the artist’s permission. This gallery showcases the power and spirit; the struggles; and the stories of these brave young women. They show the rest of the community the truth behind “the closed door” and the effects those acts have on these young women - but moreover how these ladies are taking a bad hand and turning it around and making something new of themselves. They prove to themselves that they have worth, while showing others, “I am here; I am a survivor; and look what I can do!”

### **Expansion**

More than expanding to encompass all sexes and genders, I want to expand my reach. I will start with an Internet base to connect to these young adults. More than just being a website to bookmark, I want to expand my locale. I see a Studio in every college town that has no helpful abuse outreach program. For those that do, I want the Studio to cooperate and merge with said organization(s). Abuse, rape, and violence hurt all too frequently across this world. If we can help these young adults while still young; we can not just save them grief in their futures but also through them engender awareness and healing. College towns will just be the beginning; I would love to grow and expand into most towns and cities that show a need for such a location.

More than physical and Internet expansion, I want to expand the ways in which I can help these young adults. Once I receive enough funding and have a solid account where-through I can sustain this, I will create a scholarship program. College is difficult enough but with added disturbances such as trauma it can be made much more difficult. I want to help alleviate some of this stress. I will offer scholarships from small, denominations to semester and annual scholarships. When my reach is national enough, I will partner with several universities and set up scholarships that can give young women a full-ride.

## II. Business Model

The following business model is based on the Barringer-Ireland Business Model (Figure 1). It serves as an overview for Phases One and Two of The Studio. Each phase could warrant its own model, but for the sake of the big picture and this specific project, I felt it best to make one model. I will simply discuss Phase Three.

Figure 1

Core Strategy		Resources	
Business Mission	Basis of Differentiation	Core Competencies	Key Assets
Target Market	Product & Market Scope		
Sales & Financials		Operations	
Revenue Streams		Operating Model	Channels
Cost Structure	Financing & Funding		Partnership Network

## Value Proposition

The customers that The Studio will be serving are in a unique category. These young women are not searching for the latest product or something to make their life easier; they are searching for their lives back. These young women need their basic needs fulfilled. To quantify this, the first two levels of Maslow's hierarchy of Physiological and Safety needs, McGregor's Theory X grouping is not satisfied, the existence part of the ERG Theory is not being met. These young women do not need more goods and esteem-style services in their lives because they are fighting for the little life they have. So many pains stand in these young women's lives such as blockages like the high price of therapy to social ridicule in some cliques. Too often these women are clinging onto survival and need a hand up. Social, emotional, and basic needs are far from being met for these young women and there are too few places to turn for help. Finding the strength within oneself to admit a need for help is a major step in recovery but it would be much easier if therapy were cheaper, more accessible, and had a network of support.

The fit I offer meets all of these needs. The Studio does not charge like counseling centers – as it is not one – nor does it carry membership fees. It is a welcoming environment that will provide space for young women who just want to get away from the world or those who are ready to begin their journey and heal. We nurture those basic human needs and provide the young women with tools so that they can take back their lives and thrive. We are a safe haven for these young women who may not have anywhere else to turn. We are the hand up that they need to propel them forward to regaining their identity be it over

distance online or in person at our locale. The ability to feel human, to feel normal, should not be anything but normal for anyone; we are helping these young women take their lives back.

### **CORE STRATEGY: QUADRANT 1**

Some preexisting organizations focus on the perpetuated problem. To put it bluntly, these organizations focus on complaining. Nothing is wrong with sharing a story or letting out emotion and commiserating. Those are all integral facets of the healing process. It is also usually part of the healing process to seek a counselor or therapist: be that from a psychologist, psychiatrist, or an alternative path. However, we need organizations that focus on self-healing. Healing can only take place once a person decides and commits to changing his or her life. However, that is a very difficult process to get to that point and it is even more difficult to stay on that path.

There is also a problem with money. Therapy is expensive. For those seeking medicine for healing, mental disorders on a medical record can increase already-high-rates of insurance. Yes, some insurance plans are “affordable” but for a young adult that is still money that could have gone to the Ramen and Peanut Butter Jelly fund. Help is expensive. It is hard enough seek help when that means admitting to oneself and others that something bad happened; but it is even more difficult with a high price attached to it.

The Studio engenders this self-healing to take place. It is a safe environment that nurtures and promotes self-discovery and healing from within through found passions. A passion is a fire and all too often that fire is stolen when a trauma occurs. When someone rekindles that fire and ignites and burns with it; it burns so much brighter than imaginable! The greatest strength is found within. This is what The Studio allows for its patrons.

Some of The Studio's inspiration comes from sayings like, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink," and, "You can't save someone from drowning if you are drowning yourself." These might not sound very inspiring but they are true of healing. A person can be handed all the tools in the world to heal herself, but she will not even start to heal until she makes a decision to change. Also, back in the depths of my despair I could not have helped anyone heal but as I evolve, I feel that I can impart to others wisdom that could be a lifeline. Though I think a better fitting anecdote for this organization would be: two people lost in a dark forest will not likely find their way out, but if one has a flashlight, is vaguely familiar with the path, and takes the other's hand then that becomes a possibility.

I know I am not completely healed, but I do know the path that many people are unfortunately walking. Too many of those people walk alone. I want to make that count one less person every time someone turns to The Studio.

### **Business Mission: Quadrant 1: Cell 1**

The Studio will provide a multimedia facility/safe haven where survivors of abuse, trauma, and mental disorders can gather in a safe, supportive, nurturing, and nonjudgmental environment to express themselves and heal through discovery of self and passion, the cultivation thereof, and growth there-through.

Overlooked victims all too often blur into statistics and not individuals. When recognized or acknowledged, it is usually in a different light – as if the person is tainted. In a college town, statistically speaking, young women are harmed by young men the most. These adolescents are vulnerable and malleable. They are often also at a loss; their still developing confidence and self worth have just been crushed. When something traumatic happens it hinders this growth and ruins lives. Younger people may also internalize shame differently than their mature adult counterparts. Many of them resist turning to their parents for help because they do not want to admit what has happened.

The Studio recognizes the above issues and will incorporate them into its goals to alleviate. Still, The Studio is not a counseling center. The Studio is an outlet for connecting, expressing, healing, and growth. This nonjudgmental, safe haven is a place to cultivate and be inspired by passion. We focus on healing the self through discovery and passion. We provide tools and a supportive environment for those young women who are ready to fight and take back their passions and their lives. Again, no story will go unheard, but The Studio focuses on healing and growing from and beyond the problem rather than just focusing on

the problem. I remember getting tired of complaining about my life, tired of living in the victim-rut; till I consciously decided to make a change and become a survivor. The Studio provides this springboard for young women who are ready to take back what is theirs, heal, and soar.

Another challenge to The Studio is that it deals with taboo topics: trauma and abuse. People avoid talking about real pain. People prefer to live in the light. These oppose one another, however, I feel it is necessary to merge the dark of the past with the light of the future.

Dealing with trauma victims will be difficult and draining; especially as we are not a counseling center – though one day we will be funded well enough and have a good enough reputation to afford counselors – be they paid or volunteers. We desire to be equipped to deal with potentially dangerous situations; trauma victims are not always stable nor are their abusers. No two survivors act exactly alike; no two have endured the same thing. All survivors have been victimized and beyond “who had it worse” we must work together and grow stronger and forge a community of support and strength.

A list of key words to act as a foundation grows ever expansive. The main word bundle I found, in no particular order: survivor, healing, growth, passion, cultivation, discovery, and worth. There are many levels to these concepts, but I felt that the listed were strongest.

My expertise lies within me. I know what I have endured and am ever healing from it. I am not everyone, but I am one of many and I am someone. I am relatively lucky compared to



what some people endure. I know that a fire lies within everyone and I want to help others find it.

Again, this is not a counseling center. It is an outlet. It is a multimedia facility to facilitate discovering passions and outlets, cultivating them, and healing through passions while finding that flame and letting it burn brighter than ever before. This is a community of women who share similar stories and can connect on a level that, honestly, no one should ever be able to connect on. This is not just brick and mortar but also an online community where girls can reach out from all over and come together to join in the healing revolution.

### **Basis of Differentiation: Quadrant 1: Cell 2**

The premise of this business is to enhance the lives of young women who participate in it. We provide the service and tools to help them regain the one thing that we can never give them: themselves. Lives are destroyed as a result of abuse and this facility, both brick and mortar locale and the online community, will help these women regain that. We will help them find their passion and their strength to regain a semblance of normality and evolve.

This facility is the voice for the voiceless; it is a sanctuary for young women to go to feel safe, welcomed, and acknowledged.

One can find similar projects online and several of those tour and have speaking engagements. However, those are mostly about advocacy. Though these organizations are

wonderful and their cause just. there is a major lack of the focus on healing and coming back into oneself.

As mentioned, in Stillwater there is a Wings of Hope chapter. I look up to what this organization accomplishes. However, I need to address a smaller target market that has different needs.

### **Target Market: Quadrant 1: Cell 3**

The niche market The Studio will serve is the teenage to college-age young woman who have unfortunately experienced trauma or abuse or is generally depressed or anxious and wants to heal.

Markets for possible expansion include male victims, LGBTQA victims, and a wider age range. I cannot in good faith start The Studio welcoming all sexes – as interacting with someone like your abuser is very difficult and prevents healing. Statistically, women are most often the victims and men the perpetrators. I would love to reach out to everyone but I will not be starting with the resources to do so. Expansion, then, must remain a long-term goal.

This business does deal with more of a psychographic market than demographic market. People can only heal themselves and they have to want to heal; this is a mindset. We can

assist young adults to getting to that point and then be there for them to and help them take back their fire and their identity.

#### **Product/Market Scope: Quadrant 1: Cell 4**

This nonprofit organization offers a multimedia facility, online and then brick and mortar, to be used by young adults who have been through a gauntlet and want to heal and rediscover their passions and passion for life.

Products available online at first will be basic promotional gear such as jewelry, shirts, stickers, patches, mugs, and the like. Once we obtain a Gallery space, we will be able to charge admission to the locale as well as sell replicas of the artwork, compiled CDs, and books in a small gift shop.

With the consent of the young women, those who paint or draw we could make prints of to sell. We could compile poetry, essays, and stories into books from those who write. Those who play music could compile CDs. It would be a way for the girls to give back to the organization if they so chose as well as show the world, "Look what I can do! I will not be silenced! I will not be forgotten! I am a human being, not a statistic."

Services would expand to include counseling in the future. This would cover the spectrum from psychiatrist to psychologist and any alternative path in between. By alternative I do

mean anything from hypnotherapy, which is what is working for me after trying the traditional route, to aromatherapy.

After sufficient growth and funding, I will start a scholarship fund. This is a very important component to me as I personally know the challenges of trying to continue school after going through a gauntlet and it is not easy. I know that if I had some more money then I would have been able to retake some classes, would have had to work less so that I could have focused on myself more, and also so that I could have seen my counselor more frequently. I will award scholarships to the young women who show a drive for wanting this money. I will not be extremely picky nor give it only to the greatest or most tragic story. I will look for young women who are fearless in sharing their story and fighting back; to those that are kindling their passions and taking back their lives; to those who want to go out and experience something new and enriching; and to those who could just use a little more of a buffer in their bank accounts. I want to make money one less worry for these young women. I will grow to become a large enough organization that I can give a large annual – if not every semester – scholarship that can at least cover the cost of tuition.

## **RESOURCES: QUADRANT 2**

I will start with an Internet presence. This is a challenging enough task to accomplish with the aid of websites such as Wix, PayPal, Etsy, and CustomInk.

I have also worked with the local company Juvo in the past and would entertain working with them to build my Internet presence, especially if I am to receive enough investments and donations from crowd-sourcing websites and investors.

I will use the websites gofundme and kickstarter to gain donations. I will also seek investments and assistance from older, more accomplished contacts of mine.

I have been looking around Stillwater for a suitable locale and have found several that would serve as a good base.

I have enquired at a local bank that has said, based on the premise of this thesis, they would be able to assist me with getting a small business loan to get this endeavor started.

I will also reach out to organizations such as the United Way to assist growth and donations.

As far as stocking The Studio, I would start with asking for donations from craft stores and local artists. I would constantly be buying crafting items on sale. I would reach out to the local community and ask if anyone wanted to volunteer their time and talents to possibly teach a class or donate things like old computers or instruments. I have found that there is power in being humble and asking for help so I would not demand supplies. I want to work with not just the young women I will be helping but also the community at large. I want to be able to bring in people from the university; maybe they can log some volunteer hours

while helping our young women realize their potential. I want this to serve and help as many people as possible and if our young women can reach out and touch the community then that is even better.

### **Core Competency: Quadrant 2: Cell 1**

My primary core competency is that I have been through a gauntlet myself; I am keenly aware of what these young women coming to me are feeling and needing. I am able to not just offer sympathy like many organizations but empathy. These young women need to feel like they are not alone and I can do that for them.

More than empathy from me, the young women will have each other. People who have not experienced what we have can try to understand us but never really do. We will be a community, in person and online. Only we can lift ourselves up but we can be there for each other to help with a hand-up and a shoulder to lean on. We have a shared story, shared past, and shared emotions. Though these bonds were created in unfortunate circumstances, they run deep and are unbreakable.

The purpose of this business is healing through passion and expression but those elements come from within. This source of core competency comes from our young women; it is an unlimited and intangible asset. Personal power and strength is an untapped resource that we aim to unleash. We will grow stronger together.

It is impossible to imitate passion. We are a group of survivors. We do not want to keep complaining about our lives but enrich them and move forward. That is something no other business can imitate or create a substitute for.

More than solely internal core competencies, I will look outward for a team. I want to surround The Studio and myself with driven, expert professionals. My team does not have to be made of exclusively people who have been through the same experiences. They need to be genuine, passionate, and caring. I expect to need at least one person to help with running the website. If I choose to work with Juvo then that person will be our liaison. I will need one or two people to help with the e-commerce aspect. Once established at a location, I will need a person to help with daily administration on premise. Once the facility is able to be open 24/7 I will need a small, dedicated team to keep it running. I also expect to need a security person or two for safety matters and insurance. I want to grow organically so as I find the need to hire more people I will.

**Key Assets: Quadrant 2: Cell 2:**

*Physical*

At first we will have an Internet presence. Anything that needs to be done in the real world, such as making the promotional items, I will find the time and space to do it in as needed with my team.

I will eventually need a locale. At first we could start to have meetings in the Stillwater Community Center. Eventually with enough funding we will move to our own permanent location for the multimedia facility as well as the Gallery. The locations I have looked at in town range from \$100,000 to \$600,000 so as The Studio grows I will have to pick a locale, with the input from our members and team, which is conducive to our needs.

### *Financial*

Initially, I will front the money for the online community. I will start projects on kickstarter and gofundme, which will bring in a fair amount of donations that can be applied to working with Juvo in order to improve the online community.

As I will be claiming non-profit status I will be able to receive some form of government funding. I am also looking into writing a grant for this endeavor.

I have secured several investors who are all willing to donate as soon as this project becomes a reality.

I have spoken with a local bank that has voiced interest in assisting me with a small business loan for start-up costs.



*Intellectual*

I will be pursuing a trademark for my company in order to protect its image, logo, and whatever else arises that one could help me with.

I will copyright any work The Studio publishes.

*Human*

As I have mentioned, at least at the start of this venture, I am a human asset. I have experienced what I wish the young women who come in have. I have also completed college and have a wealth of knowledge about general business practices so I will be able to keep The Studio in line.

The young women I will help also count as human assets; without them The Studio is nothing. They are probably my most important assets.

I will reach out to a team and hire some employees to help me keep the website and ecommerce running as well as the day-to-day operations we encounter. I plan on growing organically in order to keep practices as simplistic as possible. As I grow, I intend to hire more people as the need arises.

I will also reach out to those who are older and wiser than me. I have made quite a few contacts at Oklahoma State University who have specific expertise in fields and topics that might arise. I will seek guidance in the areas wherein I am not well versed.

### **SALES AND FINANCIALS: QUADRANT 3**

The Studio is a nonprofit organization, though it will grow to include a for-profit component. It will make its necessary money on donations and also by selling promotional merchandise. Eventually we will also sell artwork, music, and books based on what the young women create. If the young women approve, we can take their creations to be duplicated so that they can keep the originals and we can sell the duplicates.

### **Revenue Streams: Quadrant 3: Cell 1**

As previously mentioned we will rely greatly on donations and funding since we are non-profit. However, we will do what we can to bring in money as well. By selling items crafted by our young women as well as displaying their works in a Gallery space where we can charge admission we will be able to draw in additional sources of revenue.

I have recently been looking into hosting a private blog as well. The inspiration for this comes from a hero of mine who has a private fan page – Maria Brink. This blog will be for-profit and personal. I do have full intentions to donate proceeds The Studio, naturally.

Writing has always helped me overcome obstacles so creating a blog where I can post

personal stories, old writings, podcasts, videos, and the like sounds like a good idea to me. I eventually hope to write a book about my experiences and the healing process for young adults and feel that this blog forum can assist me in this dream. Again, a percentage of the profits from this book will be donated to The Studio.

As we expand, I hope to bring in experts on certain crafts as well as expert speakers on trauma and create workshops around them, which can draw in money. I also hope that with my experience of helping these young women that I, myself, can become a speaker on the matter of passions and healing and will be paid to speak at conventions, engagements, and universities. Though that facet is in definitely down the line.

### **Cost Structure: Quadrant 3: Cell 2**

The Studio is a value driven business. It is non-profit and I want the young women who use The Studio to be its main focus. Upon its expansion, I will add a for-profit component. This profit will come from not just expanded merchandise but also speaking and touring engagements, books, and an expanded gallery.

Fixed costs will include the cost of website maintenance at first. Eventually it will be either rent or a mortgage on a brick and mortar locale. This will also include costs associated with actual real estate such as bills, keeping a stocked fridge, and maintenance. I will also be hiring a team of employees once I become more established to help with the day-to-day, the website and social media aspect, some research into companies like ours so we can

hopefully work with them, as well as with product if we end up selling a lot of promotional or otherwise items.

Variable costs will have a higher magnitude. These costs will vary with what the young women would like to have in The Studio. Basic art supplies are not too expensive to keep up with but things like instruments and recording equipment carry a higher price tag.

The major cost categories will be first the website and second the real estate. I only plan on having a few employees so I will have to pay them as well but that will be after The Studio is more established and I need help.

### **Financing/Funding: Quadrant 3: Cell 3**

As mentioned above, the largest costs will be the website at first and then the real estate. Those will be the capital costs. One-time expenses will be things like instruments, computers, and other large cornerstone pieces. Those of course will need upkeep such as new strings, rosin, and reeds.

Ramp-up provisions will be kept for expanding The Studio. As mentioned previously I would like to expand to several locations to be able to include young men as well as those in the LGBTQA community. Eventually those provisions will grow enough so that we can expand into other college towns that need our help.

## **OPERATIONS: QUADRANT 4**

Initially the day-to-day heartbeat will be to maintain the website, monitor the ecommerce, and take part in social media. For these tasks I will find and use a small, paid team who will act as a board for this organization.

Once an actual location has been established, the heartbeat will focus on the young women. I imagine having open house hours so that anyone can come in who needs to but then having a member, with a low fee for the key, key fob system so that the young women can come to the studio and any time of day or night that they feel the need to.

### **Operating Model: Quadrant 4: Cell 1**

As mentioned before, The Studio offers a service: it facilitates growing from tragedy through passion and evolving. I will provide a plethora of mediums through which the young women who come can explore and craft. They can find their passions and grow with them and use them to move forward with their lives. They will also have the support from others like them and be able to help each other.

I plan on partnering with organizations like Project Unbreakable and Unslut Project. I hope to even gain the support of the Born This Way Foundation. Partnering with such organizations strengthens the survivor community. I would love to partner with Wings of Hope and become the head of this project under their watch, support, and guidance.

As far as the promotional items, I plan to partner with a company like CustomInk to print all of what we need and use them as an intermediary. Along these lines, I will use the platform Etsy to sell crafted items I make myself.

### **Channels: Quadrant 4: Cell 2**

As stated above, promotional items will be sold through intermediaries. This is so that I can get traffic from both my website and from members of those websites.

The online community I will provide also will act as an intermediary as it will be accessible to young women all over the world and be able to bring them together and they can share in their stories and their triumphs.

When the brick and mortar locale is established that will be a direct channel, though, more of a platform. This is the next level where these women can actually come together and find their passions in real life: here, they can physically share with one another.

### **Partnership Network: Quadrant 4: Cell 3**

I will reach out to Project Unbreakable and Unslut Project in hopes of getting their support but also providing their information and network to The Studio's young ladies. I will also reach out to the Born This Way Foundation in hopes to get funding as well as support. I

will reach out to the local Wings of Hope and see what I can do to help them as well as use whatever supplies they can give us.

At first all of these will start as strategic alliances but I will make it evolve into a consortia. We are the women who need to band together and rise above our pasts and our stories. We do not need to be in petty competition with other companies. We need cooperation in the world community, not competition. We need to be doing what we can to lift each other up to the greatest that we can be; we need to be part of a partnership network.

If it would work out this way, it would be great to merge with Wings of Hope or be a side but independent project of theirs. That way, I could have access to some of their funding and counseling resources as well as mentor under them and learn to make The Studio a more safe and nurturing environment.

In regards to the brick and mortar locale, I will reach out to Safe Place and get The Studio Safe Place certified. This is important to me as it will further enforce the importance on making our girls feel safe and secure while they are with us. I also want to be a place that girls feel safe running toward, not one that they hang their heads entering.

Many people have attested to animal companionship being something that has helped them through depression. With this in mind, I will reach out to local animal shelters and programs such as Lab Rescue to help our young women. Unfortunately, I do not think I will be able to adopt any animals for the organization itself since many people have different

opinions of them and some are allergic to certain animals. This being Oklahoma, many young women have grown up with horses and find solace in the care taking and riding of them. I will reach out to local ranches and find one that is willing to partner with The Studio to give our young women an opportunity to connect with something they have probably grown up around and find joyful.

### **III. Closing**

The ultimate power comes from within. This fact is often overlooked in the mess that is the healing process. I want to provide the inspiration, the springboard, for young adults to find this within themselves.

Passion promotes growth and expression. Passion is a fire. To take back that fire is one of the most powerful things a person can reclaim, especially after tragedy. Providing a multimedia facility to do this in establishes tangible, visible proof of passion and it is through this passion that people can take back their lives.

We are more than unfortunate statistics; we are survivors and fighters who are worth much more than we think. It is important that we support each other and help each other come back from this gauntlet stronger than ever: stronger than all. Even though it is not a “pretty” topic, it is an important one. Together we can put an end to “rape culture.” Together we can overcome being “victims” and through the fire and flame can become



“survivors.” If we start talking, if we can remove the taboo, then we can address real issues and fight.

This is not a problem in just Stillwater, America, but the world. I want to inspire a movement of healing. I want to give TED Talks; I want to write books. I want to reach as many people as I can and change lives for the better. I do not want to do this just for myself but for everyone who has ever been hurt and felt like they are not worthy of being human. The Studio is not for me; it is for the world.

**Final Remarks:**

I am a survivor. The majority of my time at college has been clouded with the taint of abuse. Of the few I reached out to, I received even less support. Despite all of that, I have been able to draft a business model surpassing such tragedy, am able to turn it in, present it, and proudly remark that I am graduating with honors, in one piece, sober, and changed. This has not been an easy road to travel on but it has made me wiser and more enlightened. I look forward to a future of helping my fellow young women and men persevere until there is a time where such assistance is not needed because the world has changed.

## Resources

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