

# Production-Line Creativity: Make more \$\$\$

By Angela Booth

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Summary: Maximize your productivity with these simple techniques.

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Production-Line Creativity: Make more \$\$\$ in the same amount of time

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Are you as productive and creative as you could be?

A few years ago I travelled up the north coast of New South Wales, Australia, and visited a client whose wife was a potter. She showed me around her large, well-lit studio.

I was envious.

Not because of the high-ceilinged work area. And not because of the location right in the middle of eucalypt-scented old growth forest, with wallabies and wombats on the doorstep.

I was envious because of the pottery mugs, cups, vases, plates, bowls, platters, serving trays, and planters piled on long tables, stacked in deep shelves on the walls, and rising in columns on the timber floor.

Pottery in stippled blue, pottery with a white and yellow glaze. Brown shiny pottery. Pottery lushly painted with bush animals and parrots. Unglazed and unfired pottery.

Pottery everywhere.

This was one productive lady.

At the time I thought I was productive because I was turning out a thousand words a day. I thought I was writing a lot. But the pottery lady made me realize that I was having myself on.

I asked her how much she worked. "I don't think about it. I'm here whenever I have time. I suppose I work a couple of hours in the morning, and another couple in the afternoon. And if I have something I want to finish, I'll work at night as well."

I've been thinking about the potter on and off since I met her. Because her pottery wasn't art. Don't get me wrong, all her products were good. Serviceable. But only around ten per cent of her products were wonderful.

Ten per cent... Which got me thinking. I had then, and still have, a real problem expecting perfection in my work.

The pottery lady was happy to make her pottery. And a percentage of it was wonderful. If she'd held back, and thought: "I can't make a coffee set with yellow glaze. It might not be good enough." How much would she have produced? How much excellent work?

So that's what the pottery lady taught me: Produce.

Just write (make pots, take photos, design, paint...). Like Nike, Just Do It. Get over your mental blocks to creativity: perfectionism, negative beliefs, and expectations.

She also taught me about production-line creativity, because you can't make a pot in one day. You need time. Time to create it on the wheel, dry it, glaze it, fire it.

## SECRETS TO PRODUCTION-LINE CREATIVITY

= Multiple projects

You need lots of projects. Got an idea? Great! Start it.

The only thing is --- keep a master list. I tend to be disorganized, and have notebooks I don't remember writing in and directories on my hard drives I don't remember creating. Keep a list.

= A mix of short and long projects

You never know enough to write a book. But you can write a page. Tomorrow you write another page. Maybe next week you're hot and you write five pages in a morning.

No matter. If you're working on a long project do what you can when you can. It's lovely if inspiration strikes, and hard work when it doesn't, but keep at it anyway.

Do plenty of short projects too. You get a charge from completing a short piece that inspires you to work on your current long project.

= Create anywhere

Take a notebook, or a tape recorder and camera. Snatch five minutes (even if it's in a restroom somewhere) and write, or sketch.

= Collaborate

You need a creative buddy. Team up with someone else and collaborate on a project. Having a creative buddy teaches you things you didn't know about yourself and your work. And it's fun.

But make sure that it's a working relationship. Get the work done, and then you can socialize.

= Take time out

When you work all the time you need breaks to recharge and refill the well. You'll have slow periods.

I have days where I only want to read, and I might read five books in three days. I let myself do it, because I know I need it --- I need to have someone else's thoughts and images in my head for a while.

There you have it: production-line creativity. Happy creating!

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