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Lesson 2: Josie Natori – Heritage and Ambition

AUTHOR

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OVERVIEW

Josie Natori discovered success early in her career as an investment banker on Wall Street. At heart, however, she was an artist. And she was bored. Remembering her grandmother’s advice to always be independent, she chose to leave a promising career and create a “lifestyle” fashion company inspired by the artistic heritage of her native Philippines.

This mini-lesson is part of the Economics Arkansas iNSPIRE! series and can be used to start a class on a number of related topics including productive resources, human capital, or marketing. The included activities will help your students identify practical ways to exercise their creativity and to apply it to their own entrepreneurial goals.

CONCEPTS

Ambition

Asset

Creativity

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Identify the role of **AMBITION** and available **ASSETS** in the success of a business.
- Examine the different reasons why various businesses exist.
- Apply **CREATIVITY** to the development of a new product or service idea.

TIME REQUIRED *(10 – 35 minutes)*

Bell Ringer: Steps 1 through 4 *(10 minutes)*

Mini Lesson: Steps 5 through 9 *(+15 minutes)*

Extension: Step 9 *(+10 minutes)*

MATERIALS

Visuals

- Visual 1: “Definitions”
- Visual 2: “Creative Combos”

Activities



- Activity 1A: “Creative Combos (NOUNS)” (1 card cutout per team)
- Activity 1B: “Creative Combos (ADJECTIVES)” (1 strip cutout per team)

Handouts

- Handout 1: “Video Questions” (1 per student)
- Handout 2: “Creative Combos” (1 per team of 3-4 students)
- Handout 3: “Yeah! AND maybe...” (1 per team of 3-4 students)
- Handout 4: “Why?” (1 per student)

Online Resources

- Video “Josie Natori: Heritage and Ambition”
<http://www.thisiscapitalism.com/profile/josie-natori/> (3 minutes, 55 seconds)

RELATED LINKS

The Natori Company

- Josie’s Biography
<https://www.natori.com/world-of-natori/biography/>

PREPARATION

1. Before class begins, print *individual* copies (1 per student) of Handout 1: “Video Questions” and Handout 4: “Why?”
2. Print *team* copies (1 per 3-4 students) of Handout 2: “Creative Combos” and Handout 3: “Yeah! AND maybe...”
3. Print and cut out *team* (1 per 3-4 students) picture cards from Activity 1A: “Creative Combos (NOUNS)” and word strips from Activity 1B: “Creative Combos (ADJECTIVES).”

PROCEDURES

1. Watch the video “Josie Natori: Heritage and Ambition” at <http://www.thisiscapitalism.com/profile/josie-natori/> (3 minutes, 55 seconds).
2. Ask students to work in teams of 3-4.
3. Distribute Handout 1: “Video Questions” (1 per student), and have students individually complete the questions. Allow students five minutes to complete.
4. Ask teams (Question 3): “How was Josie able to use her unique blend of **AMBITION** and **ASSETS** to make The Natori Company such a success? Answers will vary but may include comments on specific **AMBITIONS** (e.g., to have a good education, to have her own career, to not be dependent on anyone for success, to not be bored, to do something artistic, to create opportunities for women) and specific **ASSETS** (e.g., woman, Asian-American, artistic heritage, Finance education and experience, connections in Philippines and America). As time allows, offer students the opportunity to discuss their results.
5. Using Visual 1: “Definitions,” review each definition. Explain that teams will be given a couple random **ASSETS** and will use **CREATIVITY** to combine them into New Business Ideas (products or services).



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6. With students still in teams of 3-4, distribute picture cards from Activity 1A: “Creative Combos (NOUNS)” (1 per team) and word strips from Activity 1B: “Creative Combos (ADJECTIVES)” (1 per team).
7. Distribute Handout 2: “Creative Combos” (1 per team). Display Visual 2: “Creative Combos” during this activity so teams can name their ideas. Allow teams five minutes to complete.
8. Distribute Handout 3: “Yeah! AND maybe...” (1 per team). Allow a few teams to present their New Business Idea to the class. During the presentations, have other teams complete the handout together. Allow one minute between presentations for teams to discuss and collect their thoughts. Allow seven minutes to complete.
9. Allow a few teams to share the results they wrote for Handout 3: “Yeah! AND maybe...” Emphasize that the goal of this activity was to mix a variety of ideas that might not naturally mix and to ultimately stretch their **CREATIVITY**. This is meant to get students thinking outside of the box, focusing more on *abstract* possibilities rather than concrete recommendations.
10. Optional Extension Activity: Distribute copies of Handout 4: “Why?” Display the assignment, and ask students to complete it on their own paper in class or as a homework assignment. Ask students to identify three of their favorite companies or brands and to complete the table. The focus is on identifying companies that, like Natori, exist for a reason. Students will need to identify each company’s Mission Statement.



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Visual 1: Definitions

Ambition

A strong *feeling* that you want to be successful or to achieve a specific *goal*

Asset

Something of *value* that is *owned* by a person, company, etc.

Creativity

The *ability* to produce new ideas or things using *skill* and *imagination*



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Visual 2: Creative Combos

Choose one of the following made-up names for your new idea.
Select a name that sounds like the best “*description*” of your idea.

Ekcle

Didiza

Chorenn

Novaly

Hoppler

Yoffa

Looncan

Winoozer

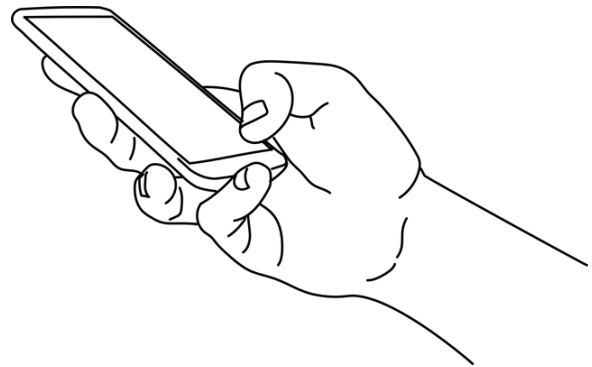
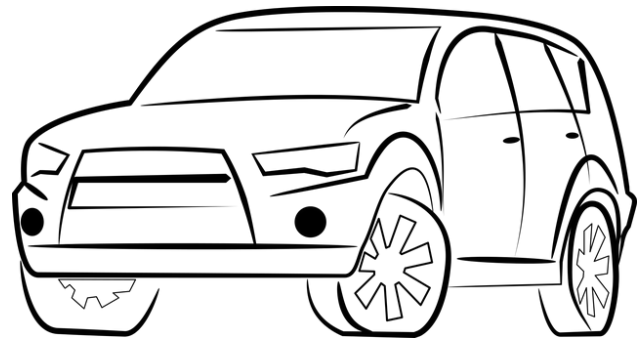
Fapster

Glomtom



Activity 1A: Creative Combos (NOUNS)

Cut out the following NOUNS into individual cards. Each team should randomly select one.





Activity 1B: Creative Combos (ADJECTIVES)

Cut out the following ADJECTIVES into individual strips. Each team should randomly select one word. Feel free to create your own lists online using a website like <https://www.randomlists.com>.

NEW

EARLY

SMART

OLD

FUNNY

SECRET

CRUNCHY

USED

TINY

DIFFICULT

SLOW

SWEET



Handout 1: Video Questions

“My biggest assets are being a woman and being Asian-American. Both of these facts make Natori what it is today. What’s really important is doing something you relate to, something that’s personal.”
– Josie Natori

After watching the video “Josie Natori: Heritage and Ambition,” work individually to answer the following questions. The video can be found at <http://www.thisiscapitalism.com/profile/josie-natori/>.

Josie’s dream for a fashion company was the unexpected result of being at the right place at the right time. Though she calls her life-changing encounter with a Bloomingdales representative “*luck*,” she is also quick to emphasize the role of **Ambition** and basic **Assets** in opening the doors for her success.

Review Visual 1: “Definitions” if needed.

1) Identify Josie’s **ambition** as it is demonstrated throughout her story. From what you heard in the video, list at least three specific examples where ambition is seen in her education, career, and/or business.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. <i>Example:</i> Took every finance class | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

2) What are **your** biggest **assets**? An asset is something of value that is owned. Many assets, which can include physical items and intangible traits, are useful when starting a new business. Josie has stated that her biggest assets are “*being a woman and being Asian-American.*” Identify and list some of your useful assets.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. <i>Example:</i> American (citizenship) | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

3) How was Josie able to use her unique blend of **ambition** and **assets** to make The Natori Company such a success? Be ready to report your results back to the class.

Handout 2: Creative Combos



*"I just don't like to settle.
Good enough is never good enough."
– Josie Natori*

Josie Natori used common, everyday objects like tablecloths to inspire new fashion products. She saw beauty and *potential* in ordinary things, and she pursued the opportunity to bring the artistic heritage of her native Philippines to the world of American fashion. She calls it “a modern harmony of East and West.”

Creativity can be described as the ability to produce *new* ideas or things using skill and imagination. This activity is designed to stretch your creativity by helping your brain make new connections (mental associations).

Your team will receive two items: 1) a picture card and 2) a single word written on a strip of paper.

What is your...

Picture Card

Word (from strip of paper)

The Challenge

Combine your two assigned words or things to create a *new* business idea (product or service) that you think might have value. Don't worry about whether or not your idea is *realistic*!

Be ready to report your results back to the class.

New Business Idea (product or service)

Handout 3: Yeah! AND maybe...



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Have you ever been asked to help “*brainstorm*” ideas? If so, you may be familiar with the common limitations of this process. We are too quick to shut down other people’s new ideas if we think that they sound silly or unrealistic. As a result, we often limit the true potential of those brainstorming efforts. Not today!

Instead of finding all the possible flaws or obstacles in your classmates’ new business ideas, your challenge is to consider their fullest potential. How much *better* could their idea be if we just added something else to it?

Listen to each team present their New Business Idea from Handout 2: “Creative Combos.” Respond to each idea with, “*Yeah! AND maybe...*” For example, you might respond with, “*Yeah! AND maybe...it could charge your cellphone at the same time!*” Be ready to report your results back to the class.

#	New Idea	Yeah! AND maybe...
1	_____	_____ _____
2	_____	_____ _____
3	_____	_____ _____
4	_____	_____ _____
5	_____	_____ _____
6	_____	_____ _____
7	_____	_____ _____
8	_____	_____ _____

Handout 4: Why?



"Your business needs a raison d'être (reason for being/existing). Be prepared to work 24 hours a day, and be willing to take risks. And you have to love it or you won't succeed."

– Josie Natori

Your study of Josie Natori has shown you that an entrepreneur’s ambition and assets can be a great source of opportunity. For every entrepreneur, however, there is a **reason** why they chose to start their business. Maybe it is the freedom to be creative. Maybe it is the ability to use their skills to make a difference in the world. Josie’s efforts resulted in a quality product as well as employment opportunities for women in the Philippines.

Every business should be able to answer the fundamental question: ***“Why do I exist?”*** When you know and truly believe in the “why,” your customers and employees will believe it, too! Most often, we find the answer to this question in the form of a company’s **Mission Statement**.

Visit the websites of three of your favorite companies or brands. Search for their Mission Statements. Do they clearly describe “why” the companies exist? Fill in the blanks below for #2-4 (#1 is done for you).

#	Company	Mission Statement
1	Starbucks	To inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time.
2	_____	_____ _____ _____
3	_____	_____ _____ _____
4	_____	_____ _____ _____