

Jeffrey Shaw

How to market your creativity to get paid what you're worth

Speakers:

Nick Skillicorn – Innovation and Creativity Expert and Host of Innovation & Creativity Summit

Jeffrey Shaw

Expert Interview transcript:

Nick Skillicorn: Hello Everyone and welcome to another expert interview at the innovation and creativity summit 2017, I am very happy to have Jeffery Shaw with us today, Jeffery is a elite photographer, He is the host of the very popular creative warriors podcast and he is also a business coach around the topics of improving your creativity in business and how to figure out exactly how to market yourself. Jeffery it's wonderful having you here

Jeffery Shaw: Glad to be here Nick Thank you.

Nick Skillicorn: So for people who aren't aware of whom you are and the work you do, can you give us a bit of background as to where you started and how you got into the concept of creativity

Jeffery Shaw: Sure. I started as a professional photographer when I was twenty, by that I mean that I photographed families and children on locations, then it was an unusual business and I mean people didn't just do this for a living, I wasn't sure I could do it for a living, I thought that it would probably make more sense to be an architect but I didn't have the patience to go to school for an architect, so I went to photography school, that's kind of my foundation for thinking, I mean I achieved a very high level of success in a relatively short period time as a photographer in a very unique market of the super affluent of the united states. I kind of took it for granted honestly I was young, I didn't take the success for granted but I took the journey for granted, I didn't realize how unique it was, Even though I knew my friends around me who were photographers were barely getting by and going out of business right to left... it wasn't until I matured that people started coming to me and saying how did you do that I wasn't aware I had some unique marketing and branding skills and a different mindset so from that I started coaching and then once again I got the coaching practice much rapidly than coaches historically do and then again coaches coming to meet me for coaching, that's kind of the main thing I just realized what I could do what I love to do and encourage people to do it, just hand me any freaking unusual business that you have, I am sure you are going to make money out of it. I am not a corporate coach, I am not really interested in the easy way to make money but what really excites me is people doing really unusual things in the world, that I can figure out. I don't know why it is; it's just in my brain I can figure out how to make the connection between people doing unusual things in the world and how to make a successful business model out of it

Nick Skillicorn: I guess that's one of the reasons why I am so keen to speak to you today, just because there seems quite a stigma around doing different things or creating special things as a profession, a lot of people just think of artist as either being super successful or living on someone's couch and as you say struggling to get by whereas it doesn't really need to be like that

Jeffery Shaw: I think the problem is, the biggest issue is how the artist themselves, you know this kind of fall victim to the whole mentality and having said that I don't know the biggest issue is they could really quickly adopt this attitude that I can't be good at business, they so quickly write off that they can't be good at business which is simply not true. The problem is they have probably been trying to do business the wrong way all along and the reason that is, we live in a very traditional business model mindset where the world is in primarily, I don't know the statistics but ninety percent are left brained or left handed and what percent is just left handed, there's a direct correlation to creativity is, the fact is that we live in this traditional business world that has a certain way of doing things that feels creepy to us that is not line with the way we want to do business and we immediately just assume that we can't be good at this when actually it's the other way around. I mean if there is ever been a time in history where the world is waiting for the most self centered person to show up. I was leading a coaching class recently and saying how a lot of creative's are introverts, what a great time to be in business as an introvert, it's the quality of an introvert that really can shine today as far as we are good listeners, we are heartfelt, we tend to be very present and attentive. Social media what a great outlet for marketing for the introvert, you don't have to leave your home. I actually think this is the time which is why I am stepping up so much, I don't know if you have heard the statistics that by, in the US anyway but I guess it applies in the UK and in other countries as well that by 2030, sixty percent of the economy will be driven by freelancers and creative's in business, sixty percent. So the opportunity is there, I have to say it partly, my fear Nick though we got to be prepared to know how to succeed because there aren't MBA programs for this.

Nick Skillicorn: Even if there were MBA programs, will they be the appropriate things.

Jeffery Shaw: Not for ten years not until the schools adapt, we talked about our institutions that can take forever to adapt, educational institutions take forever to, which is why I am of such a big believer of online education courses nowadays because you can get that Boston information put together your own MBA, take online classes with the coaches and the trainers that are online put together your own MBA program because it doesn't currently exist, if you are doing anything business that is out of the ordinary, I have coached many people one comes to mind who is a NASA scientist, I mean this is a brilliant woman, she decided to become a photographer and in one of our calls she was like defending herself, because I am a smart woman, why can't I figure out how to run a photography business, I was like well welcome to the world of creativity in business, she is a smart woman, her whole world very left brain and very logical and yes she is incredibly creative and talented by the way succeeding madly now but when I started with her that was the biggest shift, was like how do I learn to be in business as a creative person instead of a creative person fighting against the way the world is doing business.

Nick Skillicorn: I think that's probably where we should start the conversation, the questions around why do these people who want to do their own thing whether or not it's in small companies start ups, whether is individuals trying to do creative work, why do they struggle so much with this concept of running their own business.

Jeffery Shaw: Well I say fundamental because they are trying to because no one is pointing out to them that they can do it differently because I worked with a lot of them. In my background as a photographer I still coach a lot of photographers, obviously incredible visual people who sent out the ugliest emails possible it's just suddenly I point out the obvious because they are trying to go why because they are receiving email blasts from every online marketer out there and they are trying to emulate them. Instead I say to them that is not who I am, I can actually bring something better and newer to the game of online marketing because I have got this visual capability, so a lot of times its hard actually, I often say to a lot of people that the world we are living in today you can't shut off all this information. Often occasions I will make my coaching clients get off face book for a month just to bring some quiet into their world, but how many of us can really stay off face book for a month, not easy. The fact of the matter is, all the information out there is often very contrasting information, what we often need is a better filter of discernment, again there are so many ways in which the traditional world tells us to behave a certain way, overwhelm is one of them, we are always told to control the overwhelm. The fact of the matter is creative thinking people have a broader peripheral vision than your ordinary person. We see more, hear more and feel more, that's what makes us talented. So you are not going to shut that off, shutting that off will be a contrast instead of shutting that off instead add to that what I refer to as a filter of discernment, the ability to decide what's to your advantage and what's not to your advantage but don't shut it off. The same way one of my wrongs position is around this idea that we are constantly told to focus. The worst business advice out there today, for a lot of us and certainly any creative thinking business person is the worst business advice out there is to find a niche, it really is and that's the most common traditional business model advice for a while now, why is it so horrible, one it's a bad business model, if there is a change in technology, you can become irrelevant over night. To me the biggest issue is that it comes in complete contrast to the natural ability to be creative. We do see hear and feel more so leverage that. So I say leverage a lack of focus and from that what is a common denominator that you can use, what makes you different, what makes you marketable, let's find that what makes you different and unique and as far as I am concerned, whatever different avenues of your business model that you create, they are no different than different artistic medium whether its pastels or oils or sculptures. You know and the renaissance that we reveal today is somehow criticized and I think it's the reverse. To truly succeed in business we need to be diversifiers

Nick Skillicorn: It's a very controversial statement, you say that people who are trying to set up a business shouldn't be focusing because quite often especially creative people they aren't more prone to taking in all of these new information that other people are receiving but that can also cause them to be quite distracted and not really know how to progress on how actually getting results. What would you say to that?

Jeffery Shaw: So I say there is a difference between focusing and direction, alright that's an important distinction. It's important to have a direction; direction is established by your ability to visualize your future and to be committed to it. I encourage people to not change direction a lot. If you are a creative thinking person if you tend to be innovative which is what you want to be, don't expect success but first hang on the gate. I have a word to my client before doing something new, I require they do it three times before we access if they will continue doing it or not because if it is truly awesome it shouldn't work the first time because we are creating a change, we are creating an

atmosphere that is different, a marketing effort that is different from what people expect. It shouldn't work the first time because it's new, the second time gives you a chance to tweak it and the third time gives you a chance to evaluate whether to do it or not. Because of that naturally creative ability to chase for us to chase squirrels on is the change direction for us. You want to stay in your direction it doesn't mean you want to narrow the focus, very big difference and I think hopefully people are hearing that for the first time because I don't think that is said often enough, there is a difference between direction and focus. We need direction but that doesn't mean we should narrow the opportunities by collapsing to that idea that we need to focus on one thing. I think it limits our creativity and fundamentally I think it's a bad business model.

Nick Skillicorn: Let's say we have got someone who is got something they want they want to do and they have got the talent and the ability and the knowledge on how to execute something perfectly but they just can't seem to find people who want it. Why do you think that is, why do you think so many people struggle to actually make money from what they are passionate about

Jeffery Shaw: They are not communicating it. everything communicates your message. I have a keynote presentation I gave its called a secret language of success and truly is if there is a key to success this to me it is, it is knowing to speak the secret language of the people you want to work with, every market has a secret language, high end low end, everything in-between has a way that they want to be communicated with. We are talking about my ago about a controversial statement because it's this statement on my profile on twitter and it says forcing creative people to focus blocks creativity, and we get seven to a dozen tweets on that a day and who are they coming from, they are coming from people who get me and that is fundamentally I think the biggest shift that I can offer to your listeners to understand that this isn't often hard for creative people to hear because what they most believe in is being good at what they do, being at what you are good at is so subjective so something you really need to understand is that people don't hire you because you are the best, they hire you because you get them and they get you. We are so living in a relationship world that the number one reason that people will hire you is because they feel you like you get them, the reason we pick up book to read is because we read the back and we feel like that author gets us. We relate to things that feel like they are personal, they feel like they get me. We would make decisions to not do business with somebody no matter how talented they are because the experience with doing business with them will not be worth it; we don't feel like they get us. I mean there is nothing worst like miscommunication; it kills relationships it's that worse.

Miscommunication is a horrible experience and to reverse that for you to get the clients that you want build the business that I refer to as being customer's centric different in customer service. I think a lot of people are very focused on customer service, to build the business that is customer centric is to put the customer on the center and build the business for them. Almost every business, particularly creative businesses are built backwards, somebody's got something, they have a good idea, they build a business and then they try to find customers Its backwards. The way to succeed is to know who you want to serve first and build the business for them and ideally it's almost the case, whoever you are and whatever you do and what your skill set is you want to marry that with the right people. Nick I will give you a phrase I tell my clients right from the beginning of my coaching with them, I will just start shifting their mind as we are going to this coaching work like one on one coaching is a year long, I have group coaching for six months but its long term relationship, I need to tell them from beginning, you need to fundamentally believe that there is a world of people that you

are meant to work with waiting for you to show up. To really absorb that, not that I built a business and I have to find people, fundamentally believe that they are already there now it is your job to show up and align with them so that they find you. It's a crowded noisy road particularly marketing you need to let them know that you are the right one for them and you get them and they get you. That is created by the brand image that you create, it's created by the words that you use, the effectiveness of your website, that's how most offers are being found today, in doing all that takes less than seven seconds because that's the average attention span.

Nick Skillicorn: I mean it's all quite related to what I often talk with my clients about innovation, when they tell me that they have got this great new ideas and great new products, they ask themselves why the people in the market are not responding to them and one of the most powerful phrases I use is people don't care about what you think of your own ideas, they only care about the value they get from what you are offering them. It sounds like you are talking the same language here; it's all about people seeing what the relationship with these individuals who are pursuing a credit profession can actually do to add value to their own life

Jeffery Shaw: It's actually this, I am working on my first book which is about the secret language actually on any idea of leveraging that and I am pretty convinced that my second book will be about paradoxes, because I am fascinated by them, the world is full of paradoxes and this is one of them creative people in business which is why I love working with them, they tend to be heart centered, purpose driven, passionate, completely not self centered and yet they have a way of building their businesses as if they are the centre of the universe. I think the worst business advice ever said was feel the dreams or I build it they will come. Nothing can be more egotistical and self centered but unfortunately it's a way a lot of people build their business, I am talented enough, I am good enough, I am just going to show off, be there and everybody is going to show off, it doesn't work that way, if you want to succeed it's your job to make the relationship connection to the people you want to serve, one of the way that I really get my clients to make a difference in their life is to up their commitment again because of the way creative people think, they don't like discipline, out of the box thinkers, the worst thing you want to do is discipline, you can't tell someone, a creative thinking person to have commitment, they have to find it, they find it in knowing that you are so good at what you do. It is a shame if the world doesn't know that you have this talent, it your job and your responsibility to let the world know that you got that and when the world know and when people that they will go so far on the limb of their comfort zone. I am primarily an introvert, I am perfectly happy living on the beach, Miami beach and I put a short on, and maybe wearing my bathing suit, this is who I am. If I can create all the impact I want to have in the world and never leave my home, I will do that. The fact of the matter is that it require that I show up on stage in front of thousands of people on an annual basis, it requires that I have this podcast that is almost uncomfortably popular. I am willing to do it because I want to do the work that needs to get done it's not even like my preferred lifestyle, my preferred lifestyle I interview a lot of authors on my podcast and so it's something so obvious with authors because one chooses to be an author because they like to be reclusive usually, and oh no I am a bestselling author now what, they take up the war that is required because the passion of the work and they believe in it. That's where commitment comes from, commitment to serve, a lot of people that you see as leaders are actually a lot less egoistical than you think even when they live their lives in a way that they are a centre of attention,

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the fact of the matter is they are doing what they feel is needed to be done in order to have the impact that they want to have in the world.

Nick Skillicorn: I think a lot of people listening who have this dream of success from doing what they are passionate about, they love this concept of bestselling author or someone who can go and give key notes presentations or just live off their passion but quite often when it goes back to what we started talking about right from the beginning, the business aspect of it, all of a sudden they have become wall flowers and they are petrified of actually talking about price or making a sales call, I can't remember exactly where I got this quote from but someone was teaching some business school graduates and he said today's lesson is all about sales, he said all you need to do is pick up this phone that he gives to you and call this number that I am giving you and you will pass the test and if you don't make the call, you will fail the test. And there are still people who can't get over that initial petrifying fear of going out there and saying hey I have something to offer, you might say no but let's try it, what you would say to those people.

Jeffery Shaw: I am very big on reframing things, because by the mere mention I see people break out and sweat. For one to me again I look at my process as a portrait photographer, the couple of hours I spend with my client photographing them is the least significant part of the process to me, the part I love the most is actually the sales appointment which of course the clients are not calling it there a sales appointment, that's the result, it's the portrait selection appointment but there is no greater satisfaction to me than that moment when there is an exchange of relationship in conversation, in my case I am talking to people about their families and their children helping them make decisions about how they are going to use the portraits and display them. You think about the doctors, when you go to the doctor's the nurse does the grunt work, the nurse takes your blood pressure, the nurse checks your heartbeat, the nurse does the EKG, the doctor shows up to have the relationship communication and gives you the results right, that service that's an act of service, so I think first and foremost we need to reframe things in our mind that getting people to spend money is not creepy, its designed to be a win win. I really get my clients to stretch on this issue and almost everybody worked with ends up making more money than they expect because I almost always have to get them to increase their rates and I said you know whatever you are charging is not meant to be comfortable for you or your customers. The moment I am comfortable with my rates I raise them, I prefer and I encourage people to be uncomfortable with your own rates so that you are showing up a hundred and ten percent, money creates commitment from your clients, when they are laying down money outside of their comfort zone, they show up more fully, even if you are an artist and people are buying your finished arts, the difference in emotional impact when we have paid a lot of money for something and that we place on our wall, we are so more emotionally committed to that thing in a way that we express it to others, in way that we share it with people that visit our home, than we are with our art or a little painting or something we bought we don't show, money is an energy we have to stop being creped out about it, it's a way of exchange that is existing in this world, it's just a structure but it's a fantastic tool to shift how much people appreciate and value what it is that you do.

Nick Skillicorn: I am sure there is a relationship that were the relationship between the prices you charge and the perceived value that other people see you are bringing, you can't just increase one by increasing the other, there need to be some way that you communicate value other than the price that you are charging.

Jeffery Shaw: Today I almost I mean I refer to as an intangible economy, I mean it is almost all perception today, some of my favorite phrases that I use in my keynote is pricing creates perception right, you can completely shift one's perception of the value and experience than have it entirely based on price and even the psychology of pricing, how it looks, we have a very different level of expectation experience when we go to our restaurants that doesn't have prices on the menu, then the expectations that we have when we go to a place that the meals are 999 and it's not just a price difference, it is the whole, it's the alignment of how they would use that experience today and this is an important part of what we are talking about here and especially the nature of the secret languages. we are making decisions, we are making decisions as consumers everyday about environments and brands and businesses that are right or wrong for us totally based on perception, perception of the way that business is presenting themselves, the styles, does that look high end or low end or somewhere in between, is it something that we have experienced before, is it familiar to us or not because familiarity is very complex, you know we are more likely to do brands unilaterally so we are more likely to buying the brands that are similar to other brands that we have bought, we make that judgment based on price, you know if something is too low we immediately assume it must not of good quality, if something is priced high and there is evidence that other people are buying it, we just think wow it must be really good it's just not for us right. So on a fraction of a second every day, we are making purchasing decisions based on a combination of elements and if you put them all together, it just this over riding perception, where does the perception comes from, perception comes from whether that brand has communicated to you in the language that resonates for you or not.

Nick Skillicorn: That makes total sense, and I am also hearing in the sense of this isn't just about individuals doing creative work, this applies to any company that's innovating and trying to put new ideas and new products out there.

Jeffery Shaw: You were talking about this before and I think you are absolutely right Nick, that will fundamentally one of the most important things is to have a willingness to understand what things look like from other person's point of view because you can think that you have the greatest thing in the world but if the world doesn't perceive it that way, it's not marketable. So in my work, we start off with a lot of personal exploration on I want to know more about them, I am looking for what makes them different, but the excitement kind it always does because I believe everything is marketable, like I said if you fundamentally believe that there is a market for you, if you believe there are people waiting for you, sure everything is marketable right, now some things might be more marketable to a bigger or broader audience than others but there is somebody out there for everybody. So when I get excited is when we have found someone's truth and authenticity and what makes them different and when I see that what makes them different is marketable, boom that's when I get beyond excited because my commitment in my work is to help creative people, to help innovative people that make the world a better place. Bottom line most of the day, everybody I work with makes the world a better place and my commitment comes from wanting them to get that out there and when I can see the connection between who they are and what they do and whether it is marketable and I have a pretty good assessment, I have a pretty good radar on what's marketable or not, I will be able to find those people, that's the sweet part, that's the sweet part every entrepreneur is looking for, they are looking for that sweet spot between being good at what they do and connecting with the people that value what they do. A quote I use often of my own, I see if I

can remember it, but it's something like it's not your job to find people who value, wait let's get it right, I am not going to remember sorry but the essence is I think too many people get caught up in the idea that they are trying to find people to pay them what they are worth, that's not your job, your job is finding people that value what you do right, again I am a huge proponent of getting people just work with the right people because you exhaust yourself trying to prove yourself, it's not your job to prove yourself to anybody, it's your job to find the people that value what you do, that's actually the quote

Nick Skillicorn: Perfect I am sure we could talk that length about all this much more detail and going to a specific tactics, I am sure you have got resources that people can look at to find out more about that, but we are coming up to the end of the interview and I will just like to ask you what I like to ask all the experts which is if you have got one tip or one actionable insight that people can go out and try this afternoon or this week, what would you recommend that they actually do

Jeffery Shaw: well, I am going to give a little less of a tip and a little more of a concept, I truly believe in working from the inside out and I think that it's important to understand, I know sometimes I have to work from the outside in like just give people the tips they want to hear, first I know they can be effective, I refer to that kind of getting them in through the back door but fundamentally I really believe people first need, they need to do the inside work, so something I would offer people to really think about because I want you all to get paid what you are worth, I am as of recent on a mission to burst open the whole pareto principle which is the 8020 rule that the eighty percent of your income comes from twenty percent of your customers, its true and factual, the problem with is for us to in business today, we can't afford that, we can't afford eighty percent of our income, we can't afford to only have twenty percent of our clients be the right customers, we can't. They must all have to be the right customers so what I challenge people to really think of is are you charging full value for what comes easy to you, so one the reasons why people struggle to get paid what they are worth is because they don't see the value in what is actually easy for them, we have this in our mind set that we should get paid more for what is hard, I put in a lot of hours, that took a lot out of me, it was exhausting, I therefore need a lot of money, it actually the other way around, what comes easier for you is likely to be your natural skill set, your natural talent and commands the highest price so it is painful to me to see how many people wonderfully talented people not get paid what they are worth and are really under charging because they say I can knock that out on the half hour, it is easy for me, it's like they charge five times that because if it comes easy to you, it does not come easy to the rest of the world and that's the group of people that are waiting for you to show up, so charge your highest premium for what comes easy for you and I would love to encourage people to start thinking about that differently

Nick Skillicorn: It's a fascinating way of thinking and if people want to find out more about the work that you do and all of the insights that you offer, we are going to have all the links down below the video at description but can you briefly tell them what those resources are

Jeffery Shaw: Sure, I think the best the best resource is my community website which is creativewarriorsunite.com and there you will find creative where is the podcast, you will find lots of free eBooks that I have written, there's also a connection there to a closed face book group, I encourage people to join that as well, very active community of creative people in business. So I don't refer to that as my website, its literally for the community, we have been crating articles that

we come across online, there is a fantastic resource page that I put out all the tools that make creative businesses successful. I have a whole page devoted to that. So it is a resource, the entire community site. so that's a powerful podcast as you know are incredibly valuable free information I mean what a world I love that. That will be the number one and then secondly I would encourage everyone to try out, I have an online mini course, seven days mini course delivered via SMS, a very quick couple of minutes a day but it gives probably the best taste and understanding of the way I think and what I think creative people need. It's kind of an assessment, so at the end if you get the results of the assessment and you get that at weekofthewarrior.com so I think it's a great place to start because you will get a huge understanding about yourself and a little bit of an understanding of my very different way of looking at business.

Nick Skillicorn: Perfect, Jeffery it's been wonderful having you here and I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Jeffery Shaw: Likewise thanks Nick, I appreciate it.