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# MICROENTERPRISE HITS THE BIG SCREEN

Carla's Movie Restaurant:  
A Directorial Debut in Business



By Carla & Hilda Sramek,  
and Leslie A.M. Smith

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Photographs courtesy of Hilda Sramek  
Illustrations by Leslie A.M. Smith

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## **Our Intention**

This book is intended for anyone interested in starting a microenterprise. There are additional resources available to ensure people with disabilities can do the same. We have outlined all of it for you in this guidebook that is as much a memoir as a handbook.

What is crucial to the success of the microenterprise is that the TEAM around you champions it forward. YOU NEED THAT TEAM! It's up to you if you want to enlist supporters, but it was definitely true for Carla Sramek, who has broken the mold in many respects and created a model that supports her as a whole person in society.

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## Microenterprise Hits the Big Screen

Carla's Movie Restaurant: A Directorial Debut in Business

### Meet Carla Sramek



Carla Sramek is an artist whose life revolves around people and music, theatre, costume design, art, and films, all expressions of her God-given gifts. As a child she was segregated in education and her family was told she would never learn to read. The story of her inclusion in regular classes was told to Mexican author Benjamín Valdivia, who then wrote *La Jaula de los Diferentes, The Cage*

*of the Different People*, based on the cage which had been built specifically for Carla by the school district. Upon leaving the cage, Carla's purpose became to teach and inspire others through her life, her Christian faith, and now as owner of her nonprofit [carlasmovierestaurant.org](http://carlasmovierestaurant.org). She has presented her life lessons at conferences and colleges both in the USA and abroad, and continues to do so. Carla lives in Rossmoor, California, with her two roommates and her dog Pinocchio. She is forever thankful for her Angel Team and community of believers.

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## Foreword

Dear Reader:

Thank you for choosing to read about Carla Sramek's personal journey of following her dream. The journey brought about so many learning experiences and so many times the Srameks asked themselves, "How would anyone else know how to do this?"

The Srameks were never shy about asking for help, asking how things worked, and then allowing the help and helpers to come in. Others might not be as persistent in the beginning while creating the foundation before getting to the fun stuff, but it's necessary.

The idea for this guidebook was first articulated by Linda O'Neal and Richard Rosenberg from the Thompson Policy Institute of Chapman University. They were helpful advisors and cheerleaders for Carla's dreams from the beginning. They suggested to Carla's mother, Hilda Sramek, to put Carla's experience in a booklet that others could use as a roadmap. I met Hilda when she attended my free webinar on marketing and PR for small businesses. We continued to communicate after the webinar and the more she shared with me about Carla, the more I wanted to help her write this book following the same format of the marketing guidebook I wrote and promoted in that webinar, "Laws of Promotion."

Following the suggestion, the intent in writing this guidebook is to offer an example through CMR-Carla's Movie Restaurant and offer guidance as much as we can. We also are committed to empowering others with disabilities to not be limited by external expectations. In other words, this guidebook is as much

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instructional as inspirational. Carla has accomplished so many things in her life because her family and friends were determined to not allow her dreams and aspirations go to waste. If she believes in them, all who love her believe them too.

We hope that by reading this you will be inspired to WRITE YOUR OWN FUTURE. Just like making a movie: Lights! Camera! Action!

Please use this book as a guidebook. It doesn't contain every little detail you need, but it points you in the direction of resources already available and demonstrates that there are no limits. Any resource can be available to you if you ask. Seek and you shall find! There are wonderful people out there who would love to help you once they learn about you.

You will run into roadblocks, but remember, there is ALWAYS another way to do something. In the end, this journey will mean more to you than profits, because much of your impact is the internal growth for the people you are serving and for the people who are observing. It is about outcomes and accomplishments.

Turn the page and get started!

Sincerely,  
Leslie A.M. Smith  
McCormick L.A. Public Relations



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# Microenterprise Hits the Big Screen

Carla's Movie Restaurant: A Directorial Debut in Business



*"If you can dream it, you can do it."*

*-Walt Disney*

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This guidebook details the creation of a microenterprise that supports Walt Disney's statement above. It is intended for anyone wanting to start a microenterprise. Even starting small, with a microenterprise, it all starts with a big dream. Transforming your dream into something tangible is a lot like making a movie.

CMR-Carla's Movie Restaurant is a certified 501(c)(3) organization born from an idea that Carla first developed and nurtured when she was a high school student.

### **Why Microenterprise?**

A microenterprise is a very small business that has one owner and less than six employees. Some microenterprises have their mission to do good for others, as nonprofit, while others are created for profit, to make money. Either way, for profit or not for profit, the effects of a microenterprise can bring a change in society.

This work illustrates how one person built a microenterprise to change practices in the workplace and attitudes in the community. It is about bringing people of all abilities together in regular settings that changes society. You will notice that CMR is a do-good business.

CMR is a purpose-driven, passion-fueled endeavor that has what Carla's dream is about: to give artists a place to show what they create and to bring people together. It honors the gifts of all artists with and without disabilities and contributes to the effects that the act of creating has on the human spirit.

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### Carla tells it in her own words



*Hi! I'm Carla. I started thinking about my Movie Restaurant when I was in high school. I got a job at Hollywood Video and started the Movie Club at Los Alamitos High School. With my friends we held cooking demonstrations in the backyard.*

*I always wanted the movies and the restaurant together. We had a MAPS meeting [Making Action Plans] with my family and Angel Team and friends for what to do next. I worked at Hollywood Video and learned how a movie business runs, how employees are trained, and how they work together. I worked there nine years and learned about a real business.*



*Congratulations  
Carla  
Fifth Year Anniversary*

Thank you for your commitment to the Team  
by reaching this important milestone with our company.  
We wish you continued success in your career at Hollywood and look  
forward to working with you on the exciting challenges ahead.

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### Recognition from Hollywood Video



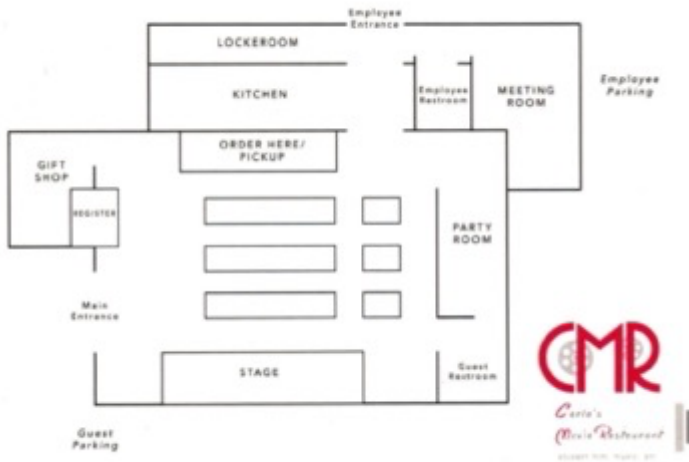
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*To Infinity and Beyond!  
-Buzz Lightyear*

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*I drew the floorplan, with tables, kitchen, stage, gift shop, party room, and employee area with lockers.*



*I picked the name Carla's Movie Restaurant in college and with my friend we started a website. I made an Employee Handbook (I learned that at Hollywood Video) and drew the uniforms. It was good to be in college and meet people who work with films and art and theater and make friends.*

*After college we started CMR with student films and music and art at Pop-ups at diPiazza's and other restaurants and everyone loves it and more. We had another big meeting and kept going. Now I really want to find a partner and to find a location for my Movie Restaurant. We could build a Restaurant and start working there.*

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**ACTIVITY: Start keeping track of your dreams.**

As you begin your pursuit of a micro-enterprise, start keeping track of your dreams. The following activity will help you harness your thoughts and ideas.



Complete these statements:

My microenterprise will offer (what product or services do you want to provide):

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I want to provide this because

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The people I like to work with are (identify your target audience; if you think it's "everyone" or "anyone," it's not. More about that on page 26)

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My hope is that from working with me, they will feel

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## In the Writer's Room

*"The most honest form of filmmaking is to make a film for yourself."*

*-Peter Jackson, Director*



Even though what Peter Jackson says is true that this business is for you, with your vision, you don't do it alone!

A writer's room is where the writers of a TV show meet and discuss all the details of the show. It's a shared process where ideas are discussed and modified until they work perfectly.

Everyone needs help creating a new venture. It's a collaborative effort, even if it is one person's brainchild. Bring in your friends and family for the help you need. They can help you walk through each part of the business, just like creating scenes that together make a great TV series or a movie. What you learn in the first experience you will use repeatedly, and so will all the contributors.

Carla's Movie Restaurant started with a planning meeting with 25 people in a rec-room, brainstorming and beginning to make action plans. This is an activity repeated in 2022. It is good to return to

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the place of a notable event and reflect on how far we've come and plan accordingly.

2011



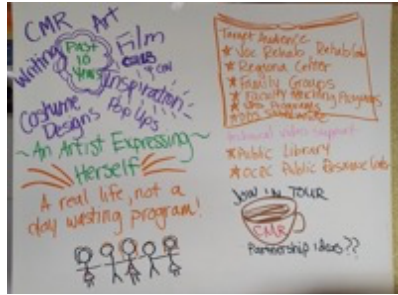
2022

We reflected on the past ten years, and everyone shared their ideas for the next 5-10 years with new perspectives in a new world.



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Our results in a nutshell ...



In one word, people shared their summary of the meeting and CMR's future ...



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**Director's Tip**

Choose people you know you can rely on, and who have an active interest in your life and your dreams, people who would want to attend your planning meeting. Consider teachers, college professors, service providers from organizations that are already working with you, family members, close friends, and neighbors. Invite upwards of fifty people and see who is available and wants to attend. Then go from there!



**ACTIVITY: Who are the people I know and trust to be in my writer's room?**

Create a full, long list. Some people will be unavailable, and it's good to have more people than less.

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Along with everyone else, it will be important to note what you bring to the meeting about your microenterprise. Having a passion for something gives anyone strength and courage to GO FOR IT!



**ACTIVITY: I AM BRAVE!**

What strengths do I bring to my microenterprise?

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

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## The Facilitator

What is critical in a planning meeting is having a facilitator who knows how to focus on your dream and how to find each participant's gift and willingness to help you. He or she will lead the group through a process to help you tell your story, your dream for the future, and the nightmares you want to avoid. The facilitator will bring to the forefront your strengths and talents and make a list of things necessary to make your dream come true: the plan of action! It is a very exciting process!



A Facilitator in Action! Richard L. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

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P.S. If some people can't make it to your planning meeting in person, accommodate them via Zoom or some other way. Someone you know probably has a large screen you can borrow so people participating remotely will feel like they're right there in the room with everyone.



### Director's Tip

Your mission statement will typically explain what you do, how you do it, and for whom. This differs from your vision that sets the tone and target for the future. Your vision will complete the statement, "Because of us ...". Fill in the blank, and you will have a crisp and clear vision statement.

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## Research is Imperative

*“People always like the easy route; you have to push very hard to get something unusual, something different.”*

*-Danny Boyle, Director*

There are endless possibilities! Because of this, you want to get to what works as quickly as possible. The best way to do that is to go to the people who have already exhausted many of the possibilities and found ways that work. Ask the experts! Don't be intimidated, you might be surprised how many people want to share information and help you.

For instance, we consulted with Dr. Ömer Benli, Mr. Ed Smith, and Mr. Bruce Sparks, from the California State University Long Beach (CSULB) College of Business Administration, who pointed us to the newly formed business incubator where we met Dean Heiss who is now CEO of Partneur. Even before this we saw Ludo Lefebvre (see photo on page 42) at the L.A. County Library, and Sasha Strauss at a Ted Talk, who later invited us to his agency, Innovation Protocol (see photo on page 31). We met with the CSULB Provost and with the CEO of the Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC), as well as with professors in education, art, and engineering in the Cal State system and Chapman University.

We were always meeting with local artists along the way for their input on their needs to bring their art to the public and become a part of the community. This was ALL arts—theatre, fine art, music,



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films, photography, improv, and we're still working on authors, poets, and dancers. All artists are welcome!

Mostly, people who have been there want to support the next generation. They might say "no" because they're too busy, and if so, call the next person on your list.



This photo was taken by the waiter at our meeting with experts at O'Malley's on Main Street in Seal Beach. It is a bit blurry, but we love to be reminded of who helped us and celebrate with them.

**Don't Be Shy! Be Ready for Your Closeup!**

You are the star of your own movie. Be willing to take center stage and ask for what you need. Call, email, visit university

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professors, existing businesses, authors of books on the topic, and any other sources of information, including webinars!

Like TV’s Mister Rogers always suggested, “Look for the helpers” and do your part. Consult with professionals and remember to give back. Make yourself available down the road to help budding entrepreneurs who come after you.

When you get to this part, you are really the director. You need to see each individual scene to come together as you want it. Some things may seem harder than others. In the parts that you can’t do, you need to ask for help. For example, making a movie also involves someone to take care of the costumes, people who understand the sound, lighting, and camera work, and possibly special effects. You need the advice from experts to help you on your journey.

*That’s the way I work: I try to imagine what I would like to see.*

*– Sofia Coppola, Director*



**ACTIVITY: Seeking advice from experts**

What areas I need help with:

Experts in this area:

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### **What's In a Business?**

You might find, like Carla did, that certain decisions require more things to happen. For instance, when she decided to make CMR a nonprofit organization, she had to have a business plan. The local university, California State University Long Beach (CSULB), happened to start a business incubator program right at that same time for their students, and it was open to the community free of charge. Working with graduate students through that program for a full year, CMR came out with a realistic and professional business plan to serve as an operational framework for the microenterprise.

### **Consider Your Audience**

On the other side of your idea to give something to the world is those who will receive: your target audience. Start researching the people you want to help, the industry and situation, meaning the circumstances at a specific point in time. You will want to create a snapshot of the people you serve in your area.

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There's a sample chart on the next page that you can replicate and customize to keep track of your customers and other target markets. This is a necessary step, and this chart makes it easy to collect some data as you go so you can know who comprises your prime target markets. You will not have all of these targets, especially not in the beginning. Eventually, you will have people from many of these levels or others not shown on the chart. For instance, if you form a nonprofit, then 'donors' will become one of the markets you communicate with in unique ways.

Think of it this way:

- Who are you serving? Is your organization for all ages? Are you providing a safe place for people with different abilities/disabilities? It's important to know this so you can create themes and effectively attract your audience.
- How can they be engaged? Carla invites people by encouraging artists of all kinds

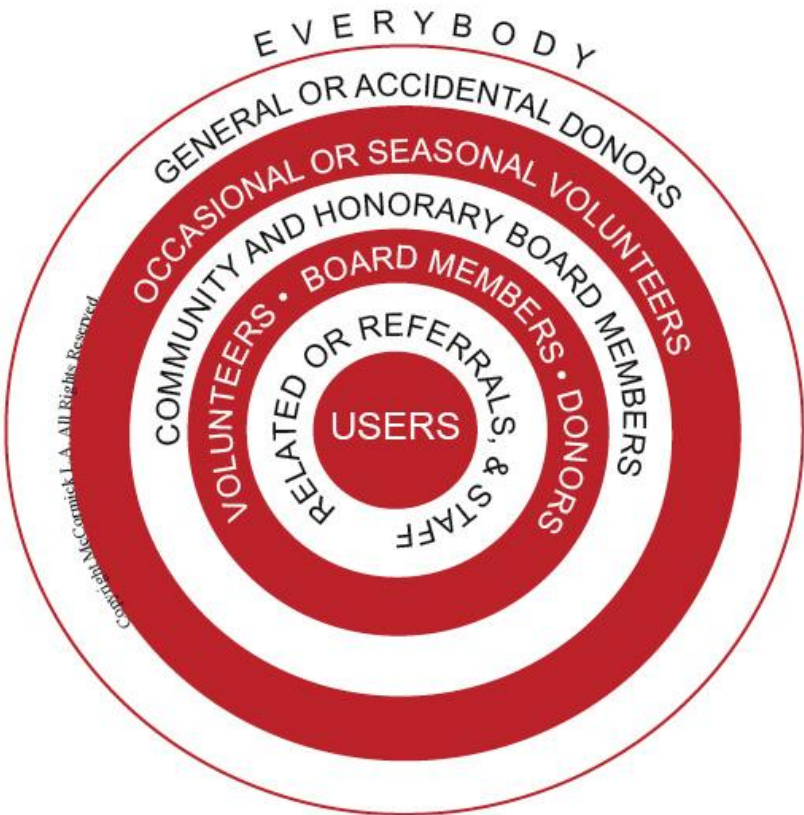
*"Bring your art, enjoy your art, join in!  
Send us your art. I hope you come to this one!" – Carla*

- Being inclusive with people of different abilities and the impact it has on everyone working together is a gift to any organization, nonprofit or for-profit.
- Allow businesses to volunteer their resources (space, food, etc.). Ultimately, they will gain as much as you.
- Others than just your users will benefit from your microenterprise. For example, when CMR's Pop-up was at a local restaurant called Griffins Grill, the manager brought in additional staff for the evening, because CMR attracts so many people. At the end of the night, they asked, "When

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are you coming back?" They were rewarded by working with CMR.

Look at this target. By serving the people in the center, you impact many other rings of the target.



Keep in mind that sometimes the USER is not the decision maker. Though you want the user to come through your doors, those related to that person may make the decision for the user.

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Start collecting demographic (facts about your target audiences) and psychographic (how they think or act) data and keep compiling as you learn more.

**STRATEGIC MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**  
**Demographic & Psychographic Target Market Grid**

Target Markets	# of People	Avg. Age	Gender Ratio F:M	Ethnicity	Education	Professional, Trade, At-Home Parents, Retirees	Techno-savvy (Y/N)	Length of Time involved in your org.
Users (and/or Constituents, if you have a membership component)								
Related or referrals								
Staff								
Active Volunteers/Board of Directors/Large Donors (administrative board.)								
Second level board (honorary, founders, governors)								
Occasional or Seasonal Volunteers								
General or Accidental Volunteers								
Vendors/Service								
Other:								
Other:								



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### **Create a Brand Identity and Brand Strategy**

Choose your business name and the look of the logo and any other collateral materials carefully. These fundamental pieces communicate so much! Of course, you can change them, but it's better to get it right at the beginning by putting in the necessary time and attention.

For your name, bring your Writer's Room back together to discuss possibilities and the pros and cons of each one. It doesn't have to be fancy or clever. CMR-Carla's Movie Restaurant is very simple.



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## Director's Tip

*"If you're really in it, you can't get it wrong."*

*-Shia LaBeouf, Actor and Filmmaker*

Put yourself at the center of your microenterprise and protect your vision. You might eventually have an art department or marketing agency to work on your brand, but until then, use your local resources. Your local community college or university will have a graphic arts/design and marketing/business departments. That's a great place to start! Propose that a whole class help you develop your branding, like we did. They were happy to do this with Carla, even though it did not work out with the working group and our core values on integrated employment.

If they can't do it all, they might give you some guidance for colors and perhaps design a logo, or maybe a professor would meet with you during office hours. There are also several low-cost online services that may be helpful in creating a logo for you.

Pay attention to presentations in your area that could be beneficial to you, like TED Talks or TEDx Talks. If you go to any in person, it is more enjoyable when you bring a friend along. At a Los Angeles TED Talk we met branding expert Sasha Strauss from Innovation Protocol. He invited us to come to his office with our team for a session with his own team in L.A.:



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InnovationProtocol.com -- Strategic Brand Consulting and Design



Hannah Cherry, Sasha Strauss, Hilda Sramek

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## Implementation

### Casting

*“Try and understand what part you have to play  
in the world in which you live.*

*There’s more to life than what you know  
and it’s all happening out there.*

*Discover what part you can play and then go for it!”  
-Ian McKellen, Actor*

Having lived through a segregated special education program away from her home surroundings from preschool through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Carla had enough of that kind of separation and wanted to go to a regular school just like other kids. Therein began her purpose, from a very young age, to change attitudes towards people with disabilities.

“Why they do that, mom?” Carla would ask when she experienced or noticed mistreatment. She attracted people in high places who also believed that all kids belong together in their neighborhood school. They helped her to go to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in a regular classroom in her neighborhood school. They became her Angel Team and are still on the journey with her.

From initial planning meetings you could attract people who decide to stick with you. They might give you some money like executive producers do to make a movie. The most valuable

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things they can give you is their loyalty, their time, their expertise, and their lifelong friendship.

Do you need more people? Until you can support a blockbuster cast, you're going to operate like you're making an independent film. In other words, you're going to rely on favors, volunteers, and kind-hearted contributors. These people will be your biggest stars!

Tell your story and people will want to help you. By helping you, they will help themselves and become an essential part of your story and your microenterprise's success.



CSULB College of Business Administration  
Dr. Ömer Benli and Mr. Ed Smith with Carla

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**ACTIVITY:** Consider the people you will need to run the microenterprise



How many volunteers do I need?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What roles do I need to fill?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What qualities or characteristics do I need on my team? (e.g., good listener, management skills, promotional experience, fundraiser, etc.) Write the qualities that you think will make it work.

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### **Who is Around?**

You can start with existing support from people or agencies already working with you, and those in your area, like the Department of Rehabilitation. Check your local resources to find out what support is already there for you.

Consider who else is interested and who else will benefit from what you are working to accomplish. There might be people with certain disabilities who have talents that match your business. Josh Lockwood-Wewer became our MC ([www.captain-peanut.com](http://www.captain-peanut.com)).

It's likely you are working with a small budget to start. Volunteers can be great workers! Turn to your local college where they might have student ambassadors whose job it is to represent their school in the community. We found out that CSULB had student ambassadors, and professors also sent us their students to help. Some classes require service hours, and if you make it fun, students will show up! Volunteers can help in a variety of ways.

We all learn by doing, so don't put off your dreams! Start now! Grab every opportunity you can. With a brand-new concept like Carla had, it was important to keep a list of everyone, and follow-up on every lead.

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**ACTIVITY: My role(s)**

What role do I play in the microenterprise? Circle all that apply.

- Maker/Creator – I make or create what we are selling.
- Manager – I manage others to bring their talents together.
- Promoter – I tell my story out in the community to gain more support in several ways.
- Sales – I sell my product or service
- Connector/Collaborator – I bring people together who would otherwise not get to meet each other.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Looking at the things that I have circled, I realize:

- A. I am doing too much.
- B. I am doing too little.
- C. I am doing just the right amount!

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**If A**, then you are a very capable person, that is wonderful! It is also a strength to ask for help and delegate. To avoid feeling overwhelmed, choose the one or two things you really love and then delegate the other things. It does not mean you will never do the other things, it just means that is not your concentration right now.

**If B**, figure out why. Do you need to let your team know that they have taken on more than you wanted them to do? Share your concerns and be very clear about what role(s) you are certain you want to do. If you feel like you are not being heard, call the facilitator back and round up the team for another session, this time to define roles.

**If C**, that's great news! Keep an eye on things. If one of your important team members must back-out, find a replacement, don't step-in and absorb that job too. If your microenterprise grows, have a plan to hire more help rather than taking on more work yourself.

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*The simple act of paying attention  
can take you a long way.  
-Keanu Reeves, Actor*

We paid attention to what was happening around us: trends, the news, conversations, and even unsolicited advice. Listen to everyone's ideas and write them down. And call together people from different areas to get together and brainstorm. Artists told us what they would like to see happening at CMR and we listened. Sharing a meal always brought us closer; nourish the body and soul.



Artists and Leaders from Regional Center of Orange County



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### **Director's Tip**

If three people say it's good, go with it, try it!

For us, that worked! Three totally disparate people who did not know each other directed us to the same place for our premiere engagement: DiPiazza's Restaurant and Lounge! It was a perfect place, with a lounge and stage and a sound room!

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We held pop-ups there for the next eight years, until Mark DiPiazza sold the restaurant.

Learn from every outcome. We find the positive in negative comments and happenings. Someone early on said to us, "It's

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going to take angels from heaven to make this happen.” Our reply, “Sure, bring in the angels!”

We held what turned out to be our final in-person pop-up at diPiazza’s on February 20, 2020, right before the pandemic hit. We didn't want to stop! In 2021 CMR joined the virtual community, and on a positive note, it made CMR accessible worldwide with a series of online pop-ups.



CMR Pop-up February 20, 2020. Carla is on the far left, with light on the table.

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Mark diPiazza with Hilda Sramek, February 20, 2020.  
It was joyful to the end.

### Adapt, Be Resilient, and Be Creative

Throughout the years, CMR also popped-up at other locations, all with warm welcomes and fabulous energy. The pop-up at Griffins Grill in Los Alamitos was filmed and shown on Los Alamitos TV. Wahoo's was amazing in their patio, and at AoSA Coffee House our artists displayed their paintings indoors while music and films were in the outdoor mall area.

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Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, CMR continues its mission to provide a place for new artists and include persons of all abilities. Artists can celebrate their work and talent among peers, family, and the community.

One of the areas of CMR that demands creativity is our location. CMR combines the comfort of a theatre/stage/gallery with the enjoyment of a restaurant. Short of building the ideal location ourselves, we had to, and still must be creative. At the very start we were open to any other option to meet CMR's mission. We learned about the concept of pop-ups as temporary locations from chef Ludo Lefebvre who started pop-ups in Los Angeles in 2009. We went to hear him and Roy Choi talk at the L.A. County Library Foundation Series on "Experiments in Flavor and Form". Listening to successful entrepreneurs and their journey is very powerful.

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Ludo Lefebvre at L.A. County Library

*Photo courtesy of Hilda Sramek*

[Ludo Lefebvre and Roy Choi: Taking the Kitchen to the Street: Experiments in Flavor and Form](https://vimeo.com/54803997) from [ALOUdLa](https://vimeo.com/54803997) on Vimeo.

View at: <https://vimeo.com/54803997>

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Another trend that can be helpful to CMR's operations is "ghost kitchens" where an established restaurant's kitchen can be used during their off hours. This alleviates the need for a full restaurant license. Outdoor dining has also become more popular. Being open to possibilities, we can cooperate with food vendors and coffee houses as well.

Movie theaters have also changed since CMR's debut. They now offer multiple uses of the theater for private events. Many have been remodeled, have reserved seating, and with food and bar items served to be enjoyed during the show.

We're always on the watch to see what others are doing and if possibilities arise to collaborate or build on to what someone is doing. There is always a way to do what you envision. It's "the other way" that is so exciting, and necessary, as our society and businesses are changing almost daily. Having the "luxury" to pivot has given us an open door to creativity without the expense or stress that businesses have experienced of late.

The online business communities like Alignable allow for seasoned business owners and entrepreneurs to connect and share their expertise, questions, and new ways of doing things. Many of them will also learn from you.

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## Ready on the Set

*"I love movies with spectacle.  
But spectacle can be a performance,  
it doesn't have to be a creature."*

*-J. J. Abrams, Filmmaker*

Now that you have your cast in place, you'll need to create your foundation, like creating a set for a movie.

One of the things you'll need to decide is whether your business will be nonprofit or for profit. There are pros and cons for each venture.

### Nonprofit

It was through advice from professors of business classes and listening to business owners that we came to believe that nonprofit was the way for CMR.

Here is a link for step-by-step instructions to complete a nonprofit application from the California Secretary of State's Office:

<https://bpd.cdn.sos.ca.gov/corp/pdf/articles/arts-pb.pdf>

If you don't live in California, and can't find similar support, ask a lawyer. In fact, that's exactly what we did. We asked a friend who is a lawyer, and he directed us to use this form to create a charitable Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation. We did it ourselves. It took time to understand it, and we saved more money that way. You can complete and file your Articles of Incorporation following the instructions provided. The filing is



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now online. If you ever must mail via USPS, send it using a mechanism that supplies a tracking number or return receipt.

There are also private organizations that do it for clients. Here is an example:

<https://www.501c3.org/state-nonprofit-guide/how-to-start-a-nonprofit-in-california/>

The local university's business department at that time was recommending NOLO Publishing's How to form a Nonprofit Corporation in California. More information is available at Nolo.com, the company specializes in legal topics.

Being a nonprofit organization allows you to apply for grants.

### **Board of Directors**

One of the requirements of a nonprofit corporation is that it must have a Board of Directors. At the bare minimum, the board must have an executive committee composed of a president, treasurer, and secretary. Most organizations add a vice president and general board members. CMR has a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and a director. Carla is the founder/owner and is not a voting member.

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CMR's Board (L to R) Director Don Cardinal, Secretary Kraig Scheyer, Vice President Richard Rosenberg, Treasurer Carl Sramek

Below: President Hilda Sramek



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Resources: Local communities often have a nonprofit support center that offers classes for staying in compliance as a nonprofit. It is important to read everything as you do it. Slow down to go fast.

### **For Profit**

Registering as a for-profit organization can be very simple if you begin as a *sole proprietorship*. Check your city's business license application and fees. You'll need to place an ad in a local paper declaring your fictitious business name, your city will supply this information to you.

If you *incorporate* as a for-profit business, then you will need to name officers of the corporation. Visit the Secretary of State's Office:

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/bizfile/file-online>

Being an organization allows you to apply for grants.

### **Business Plan**

A business plan is a roadmap with all the details to operate and plan the future of your business. It's a big job to create a business plan. Ask for help if you or someone in your family or on your team has never created a business plan before. Here is a list of the essential components with a very brief description of each.

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## The Components of a Business Plan

**Vision** - This is how you see what can exist or be accomplished because of what you do.

**Mission** - Your mission is what you do, how you do it, and who you serve.

**Core Values** - What are your non-negotiable values you want to shine through everything you do, no matter what? These usually range from four to ten. If you have a longer list, check again for synonyms.

### A snapshot of the People You Serve in Your Area

The industry and situation (circumstances at a specific point in time) that affect the people you want to serve. State why there is a need for what you offer.

**Target Audience** - These are the people you want to serve. Write about who they are, the challenge they face that you want to solve. You will find out more about them in your market research, see page 26.

**Goals and Objectives** – These will be your business goals and objectives. Goals are the broader scope of the work you are going to do, and objectives pinpoint the details. In your objectives, incorporate the acronym SMART by making sure they include these attributes: Specific, Measurable, Actionable (make sure they start with verbs), Realistic, and Timed.

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**Products and Services** – Your products and services are what makes it all come to life. Write a very clear narrative describing your products and/or services.

**Financial Plan/Budget** – Create a budget based on how much capital you have to start, the expenses you need to make, and how much income you need to cover expenses and possibly make a profit.

**Organization and Management/Financial Analysis** – Once you have a budget you need to be a responsible trustee of the funds that come in. You, or someone you know and trust, needs to be keeping track of your spending against your income and comply with all the local, state, and federal laws.

**List of your Board and Professional Advisors and Services** – You want to build a blockbuster board to help uplift you and your endeavors. At the minimum you need a president, secretary, and treasurer. When you register your microenterprise, the governing entity in your state will give you those details.

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**ACTIVITY: Check-in with yourself**

What part(s) of this plan seem(s) difficult?

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What resources do I have to help me with these portions?

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By working with the CSULB Business Incubator, now called the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, we used a wonderful business model tool that you can use by clicking here:

<https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas/business-model-canvas>  
Courtesy of Strategyzer.com

CSULB Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship:  
<https://www.csulb.edu/institute-for-innovation-entrepreneurship>

Take advantage of free assistance for local businesses

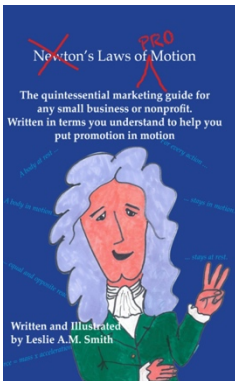
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- SCORE – For-profits, free advice from business experts, [score.org](https://score.org)
- SBDC – Small Business Development Center -For-Profits
- Small Business Administration – free downloadable business plan

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>

## Marketing

Keep your eyes open for every opportunity to learn. We met Leslie A.M. Smith, the co-author of this book and a marketing/public relations consultant, through a free webinar she promoted in our local newspaper. Through that webinar began our collaboration on this manual.



She wrote a simple, straightforward guide to marketing called *Laws of Promotion*. She wrote it specifically for nonprofits and small businesses since both groups have many of the same challenges and needed a simple plan to follow. You can check it out here:

<https://tinyurl.com/mww6z6v8>

We took a straightforward approach to promoting our events, that might work for you too

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**Carla's Movie Restaurant  
Pop-Up Event!  
May 15th, 2019**

No cover charge. Free-will donations accepted

Join us at diPiazza for a night of films, art,  
dance, food, and music!

Post on your Instagram  
story and  
@Carlasmovierestaurant  
for a chance to win \$50!

May 15th, 6:30 - 9PM  
Show starts at 7PM!  
5205 E PCH, Long  
Beach, 90804

**diPiazza**  
LONG BEACH, CA  
EAT-DRINK-ROCK

**CMR**  
A NON-PROFIT  
SUPPORTING EMERGING  
ARTISTS & INDIVIDUALS  
WITH DISABILITIES

ctsartist.com ig: @carlasmovierestaurant



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To promote CMR, we blanketed our local community using low and no-cost resources. We used social media, placed posters in our city and neighboring areas, and sent emails to the list we created when we first started and continued to build it. Here is a short list of resources that work:

- Local community weekly newspaper and daily newspapers for ads
- Local broadcast station – public television
- Press releases to issue stories to local news outlets
- Nearby university and community colleges to share with student clubs and related departments
- Mailing list – start with people you know and add new ones at every event and gathering
- Once you have established your business, join your local Chamber of Commerce or other business networking group. A membership often includes free exposure on their website and in email blasts. Then you need to attend their networking meetings!

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- When you meet your target markets' expectations, they'll want you to come back. When you consistently deliver on your marketing, your audience becomes your ambassadors, and they tell more people about the good work you're doing.

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- SWAG – Stuff We All Get, promotional items. Let people advertise for you. They like leaving with a favor. This was totally new to us, how to do it, what to get. Pens? It continues to amaze us how much people like receiving a nice pen with a CMR message on it!
- Keep up with the times. We plan on continuing virtual and in-person events. Virtual pop-ups had advantages: we could reach a broader audience and insert links to YouTube in Mailchimp mailings.
- Pivots are inevitable, even outside worldwide pandemics. Learn from others who are going through the same things. Challenges can be good, like needing more space for more guests, and bad when a restaurant closes. It also surprised us that local movie theatres went virtual.

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**CARLA'S  
MOVIE  
RESTAURANT**

**ONLINE EVENT**

Premieres  
**DECEMBER 21, 2021  
6 PM PST**  
on  
**CarlasMovieRestaurant.org**

Featuring:  
*Painted in Gold*  
*Felt Love*  
Mini Concert by Nolune  
News on Christian Valdez

Plus a sneak peek at Carla Sramek's next project!  
Event will be available to stream after premiere

## **MUSIC • MOVIES • ART**

A non-profit supporting emerging artists  
and people with disabilities



CarlasMovieRestaurant.org  
Facebook.com/CarlasMovieRestaurant  
Instagram.com/CarlasMovieRestaurant



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Figure out how you can stay open for business and still serve your audience. Pivots sometimes lead to other opportunities.

## **Other Examples Of Creative Microenterprises**

Carla’s Movie Restaurant is not the only microenterprise business led by someone with disabilities. You might know someone whose business comes to mind as you read this. Here are two more examples.



### **Dusty Dutton, CEO**

#### **Dusty's Puppets**

[www.dustypuppets.com](http://www.dustypuppets.com)

Dusty is a young woman who has been in business as a puppeteer and puppet retailer for 17 years. Her first big success was her puppet show for her 1st grade class. It was then that she discovered her niche and “her ticket to belong.” At College of Marin in California, she developed her skills and talent in music, drama, dance, singing, and the all-important improv class which had as its main project a puppet show for children for Christmas.

Dusty is a member of the Puppeteers of America and the San Francisco Bay Area Puppetry Guild which gives her access to online trainings and sharing with colleagues. She has met several local puppeteers, one of whom helped her with the feasibility study for her microenterprise, Dusty's Puppets, [www.dustypuppets.com](http://www.dustypuppets.com)

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When Dusty's business started, she went out to do puppet shows every day, at places like Head Start, the Farmers' Market, and the YMCA. Today Dusty has many fans, more than one hundred puppets, and a home studio with different backgrounds for virtual shows.

Who got Dusty there? Her parents, teachers, staff, roommates, and advocates.

Says Dusty's mom, "You have to have someone in your life who guides it. We always had to find another way."



**Otto Lana, Chief Inspiration Officer**

**Otto's Mottos**

[www.ottosmottos.com](http://www.ottosmottos.com)

We asked Otto if a movie were to be made about his life, what would it be called and what would it be like. Below is what he shared.

My movie would be titled "Ottobiography- A Memoir of a boy and a qwerty keyboard."

*My intro would be...*

We were sold the myth that early intervention is the key to autism treatment. But when the early intervention techniques did not work, the key was thrown away and we were locked in a prison resembling a preschool for all eternity. My story begins when I am nine and I meet a locksmith of a speech therapist (Darlene Hanson to be played by Jennifer Lawrence, of course)

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who gave me a qwerty keyboard and taught me to type. She not only unlocked that prison door but gave me a path to a glorious future. My qwerty keyboard has paved the way to red carpet premiums and beyond.

Putting letterboards and speller boards in the hands of multi-modality communicators makes the world a better place. With more voices being heard the harmonies of life will be richer. I started this company to make it easier for people like me to communicate on the go. I had no idea I would be this successful. I had no idea I would strike a chord with so many people around the world. I guess people had a hole in their hearts that needed to be filled and I was the guy that filled it. I donate most of my profits to nonprofit organizations that promote and support communication in all multi-modality communicators and their lives.

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## Moving Forward With Confidence

*"I have to work; this is what I want."*

*-Carla*

*"If you risk nothing, then you risk everything."*

*-Geena Davis*

We followed Carla's lead. You must pursue what the individual wants. She is determined.



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**Rolling ...**



### **Keep up with Business Practices**

Your local Chamber of Commerce can be a precious jewel in your own backyard. Learning from professionals in your city and being able to meet with them in-person regularly is more valuable than what the internet or long-distance seminars can offer. Firsthand, caring advice is priceless! The members of the Los Alamitos Area Chamber of Commerce have become our friends who watch out for us and encourage us on our journey.

We received a Christmas surprise from fellow member editor of the *Event-News Enterprise* newspaper who himself wrote an article on the 10-year anniversary of CMR in the December 7, 2022, issue of the newspaper: “Carla’s Movie Restaurant celebrates 10-year anniversary.”

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*Event-News Enterprise* Editor David Young at Chamber Meeting, December 2022

### **Reconnect With Old Friends, Make New Friends**

Life happenings can take people in different directions for a while, or forever, away from your own path. For example, our beloved Mark diPiazza sold his restaurant. During the pandemic shutdown, some of our friends at the universities retired, others moved away, and with some we lost contact altogether. So, it is *extremely joyful* to reconnect with old friends again, and also to find new ones in the same positions. When an act of kindness takes us by complete surprise, that becomes “the wind beneath our wings.” The new department chair of Film and Electronic Arts Adam Moore, and Community Engagement Specialist Sarah Len participated in our 10-Year Roundup and then gifted Carla with an FEA T-shirt—an action that speaks louder than words.



Sarah Len and Adam Moore, December 2022

### **Going for It**

Opportunities will present themselves which could give unexpected results. We were pointed to a grant opportunity through the California Department of Developmental Services. We got together a

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team and applied. Though we didn't get an award to our proposal, again we made new friends and formed a closer bond with our Team.

Any opportunity that aligns with our values is worth checking out. The best example of that is this book which came about after an opportunity to learn about marketing via a webinar from Leslie Smith presented itself through an article in the *Event-News Enterprise*.

## **Action!**

*Maybe it's just my improv and sketch background, but I'm a lot more comfortable in a group. I like sharing focus and populating an ensemble.*

*-Jason Mantzoukas*

## **Therefore ... Moving Forward**

It's about keeping the dream in the forefront, caring for your team, meeting with the Board of Directors, celebrating together, thanking friends, staying connected, daring to try new approaches and drafting a year-long calendar. Our new theme for the year is Rejoice and Do Good ... in business and in our personal lives. That feels right.

Be convinced "it" will happen, there is no wavering. How you do things may be different from the way others do it, that's why you are an entrepreneur. If something doesn't work or you learn something else, move on.

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### **Revisit Goals: Person-Centered-Planning (PCP) Goals**

Your PCP goals are focused on YOUR dreams, and along with your gifts and strengths they identify what services and supports are available to you to achieve your dreams.

These are the goals from your planning meeting from page 16 in the Writer's Room.

<https://transitionca.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Transition-Focused-Person-Centered-Planning.pdf>

### **Consider Partnering With Other Businesses**

There may be other businesses with similar values around your area. Consider partnering with another business as you grow, focus on diversity, and spread the wonder of your business. We are finding coffee houses that not only are open to having a CMR event, but are already serving persons with disabilities in different ways. Any opportunity to build connections among like-minded businesses are golden. Here are two examples:

#### **Able Coffee Roasters theableworkers.com**

A chef-turned-education-specialist and a behavior therapist-turned-business-owner create paying jobs for individuals with disabilities in their coffee house.

“We are aiming to break all the limitations in a way that no one has seen before ...”. Their tagline: “Because We Are Able!”

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## **Humblemaker Coffee Co** **humblemaker.coffee**

Humblemaker Coffee Co. is an independent California coffee company that dedicates 10% of their annual profits to enriching the lives of children living with autism, hoping to encourage for-profit businesses to create funding for the same.

### **Get Your Ensemble Cast Together**

Get your army of friends together and ask them what they think about how to move forward. This is an Ensemble Cast, not a one-person show. This is some of the feedback from CMR's Pilot Pop-up, our test-run in 2012:

- *Successful and first impression as to what will/will not work (tables, set-up, etc.)*

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- *[Use a] Bigger room*
- *Keep defining the vision*
- *Partner with other vendors who are promoting with take-home/give-away items*
- *Invite Steven Spielberg*
- *Independent and/or students' films [are] great*
- *Movies with themes like have Italian food and The Godfather*
- *[This was like] Several events interconnecting the arts*
- *Depending on the crowd may want an adult beverage option. Maybe a local winery would donate wine*

And along with ideas and suggestions for improvement, words of encouragement and cheer lift us up:

*“Keep the love going – it is contagious!”*

And ten years later, from our 2022 virtual Pop-up:

*“Keep CMR alive!”*

Yes, love is contagious, and art gives us that. So, we always keep our eyes open for talent and inspiration. Dusty looks for stories. Otto comes up with more mottos. Carla looks for movies and artists, musicians, and performers. Keep a file of some sort – a binder, a stack of business cards, an electronic customer relations management system, or just an Excel spreadsheet.

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### Like a ratings board

Keep someone reputable in your corner to point you in the right direction. It is important to have many different ages represented when you brainstorm for unique perceptions.



Consider the People You Know:

Who do I know that would give me feedback on how my microenterprise is going?

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You need to decide what metrics you will monitor. For instance, if you sell your handmade crafts, then you might have a goal of selling ten of your handmade objects at a craft fair. The number of items sold would be what you'd want to keep track of.

After a few events, you have an idea of the average number of items you can sell. You might also have noted that most people bought them in pairs. This may change how you plan to sell them.

If you are selling something, you want to make sure that your sales price is covering the cost of your materials and efforts.

The most important data is up to you. Here are a few questions you can ask yourself:

- Are you enjoying your business?
- Does the experience of having a microenterprise give you purpose?
- Does it bring you joy?
- What else does it provide for you? For example, meeting new people is a very appealing datapoint for many people.



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**Cut!**

**Editing!**

*"I love editing.  
It's one of my favorite parts about filmmaking."  
-Steven Spielberg*

You now have a business, and you need to evaluate it constantly. For a nonprofit organization, it's about outcomes and accomplishments. Much of your impact is internal for the people you are serving and for the people who are observing. So much of your evaluation is qualitative, not quantitative. It's about what people say, what they share about their experiences that tells you how you're doing and what suggestions they give from their point of view. Which means, YOU HAVE TO ASK THEM!!!

You will also discover unintentional perceptions, reactions, messaging, and misconceptions, based on the diversity of your audience.



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At the beginning we used cards with questions for feedback following an in-person pop-up. With our virtual events, we switched to using Survey Monkey and that has worked out, putting replies directly into a digital file. This was the evaluation of our Pilot.

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## **Thank You for Partaking in Carla's Movie Restaurant!**

**You are a Very Valuable  
Part of the Angel Team!**

As a Guide to Carla's Vision, we appreciate your feedback:

1. Please rate tonight's experience
2. What did you think of the test-run of the Movie Restaurant?
3. Ideas for improvement:
4. Ideas for Films/Music/Art/Eats:
5. Were the movies shown properly? Art?
6. What is a better way ... for any part!

Thank you for Your Support, Your Inspiration, and Your Love.

**CTSARTIST**

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**ACTIVITY: Are you meeting your objectives?**

Are you telling the story of your mission? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Continually align with the mission and evaluate against it. Here are some things you can do on a regular basis to stay on track:

1. Read your mission statement aloud at each meeting.
2. Stick to the script!
3. Resist distractions and “mission creep” that puts you on a detour.

Ten years later you’ll suddenly realize you’ve been making a tremendous impact for your users and all the people who helped you along the way.

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## Carla's Movie Restaurant Pop-Up Feedback: August 19, 2022 - 'The Art of Carla Sramek'

We would appreciate your feedback on the most recent CMR Pop-Up! [Click here to watch on YouTube.](#)

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\* Required

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Before watching the pop-up, how knowledgeable were you about artists with disabilities?

- Very knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Somewhat unknowledgeable
- Very unknowledgeable
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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Before watching the pop-up, what did you think of artists with disabilities?

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

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After watching, how has your view of artists with disabilities changed or stayed same?

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

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What did you learn from watching the pop-up and/or films about artists with disabilities?

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

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What are you most excited to see featured in future pop-ups? \*

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### **Are you happy with what's happening?**

Plot twists are bound to happen! If the answer to these questions is “no”, you need to edit. You need to fix what you can, go back to the beginning and re-tool things, or cut them out completely. That's okay! You do not need to try to accomplish every idea you had. It is better, in fact, to have a narrow focus that you can really stick to with laser beam focus. Keep record of those ideas that you might want to revisit later.

You might realize you need more people to help. If this is the case, make a list of the tasks that need to be completed and the skills needed to do that job. Share this need with your team. If there's no one who fits this part in your cast already, they probably have someone they can bring in.

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## Final Thoughts



*“If you want a happy ending,  
that depends, of course, on where you  
stop your story.”*

*-Orson Welles, Director*

*“We want to see your dreams come  
true.”*

*-Carla*

### POSTSCRIPT

The measure of a dream in Carla’s view is something you never stop thinking about, because it is a part of you – it is your passion and your journey, and you keep it alive no matter how long it takes to get to the happy ending. Forming it is like Michelangelo sculpting his David, or Mozart putting on paper the notes that flowed from his soul. It’s an art: shaping, molding, fashioning something original, inspired, and joyful amidst unexpected turns new directions. That she will one day have her movie restaurant in a permanent location is reality in her mind’s eye, and that restaurateur partner is out there. “I’m looking for a partner and a location for it.”

She wishes this magnificent journey to everyone who has a dream for a microenterprise. Most importantly, “You have to want it and work for it.”

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Creating this microenterprise was through passion and innovation to have a job, not to be financially lucrative or to have a job like the system wants it to be. A microenterprise doesn't have to be full-time or overwhelm its owner. On the contrary, it enlarges the owner's world in an area of interest to her, in her own way, on her terms. A microenterprise can be a business while going to school or working at another job. It is to allow gifts to come forward and bless those who receive them.



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*–Carla and Hilda Sramek*

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# MICROENTERPRISE HITS THE BIG SCREEN



## 1. Dream Comes True

Why Microenterprise?  
Keep track of your dreams.

## 2. In the Writer's Room

Who are the people I know and trust  
who can help me?  
I AM BRAVE!



## 3. Research

Be ready for your closeup!  
Ask the experts &  
consider your audience.

## 4. Implementation

Put together your cast and  
get ready on the set!



## 5. Moving Forward With Confidence

Action! Editing!  
Evaluation!



**CarlasMovieRestaurant.org**

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## Glossary

**Angel Team** – Your most trusted friends

**Board of Directors** – A committee that oversees the activities of an organization, with officers that include a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary, and directors

**Brand** – A name, design or logo that identifies a distinctive product or service

**Business Incubator** – A group that helps entrepreneurs with guidance and resources to develop their businesses plan, marketing, and networking, frequently set up through college business departments

**Business Plan** – A formal document that has a description of the business and its vision, products and services, organization and management, marketing and sales strategy, and financial analysis

**Cast/Crew/Staff** – A group of people who work for an organization

**Chamber of Commerce** – A networking group for a city’s business owners to advocate and support each other

**Core Values** – In a microenterprise, what the organization stands for and what should come through in all of its services and how they are delivered

**Corporation** – A structure for businesses requiring “incorporation”

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Facilitator – A person who neutrally conducts a person’s planning meeting

Feedback – Reactions from an audience about a performance or product to improve it

For-Profit – A business that sells a product or service for the purpose of making money

Goals – Statements of what needs to happen for the vision to come to fruition

Incorporation – Process by which an organization becomes a legal corporation

Integrated Employment – People with disabilities working in a regular environment, earning a regular salary, with accommodations if needed

Marketing – Promoting a business or organization face-to-face and through media such as print, digital, and online platforms

Market Research – Documentation of the population and services in a particular geographic area

Microenterprise – A small business with one owner and less than six employees

Mission – What an organization does, how, and for whom.

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Networking – Interacting with others to create contacts and share information

Nonprofit – An organization created to provide a product or service for purposes other than profit, and whose directors and members are not getting paid

Objectives – Steps to making the goals happen. Must include elements of the acronym SMART: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timed

Person-Centered Planning (PCP) – Process guided by a facilitator for an individual with a team of people to make plans, focusing on the person’s interests, gifts, strengths, and dreams, to find services and supports to achieve those dreams

Pilot – A trial run of a plan before bringing it to a wide audience

Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC) – One of 21 private, nonprofit organizations contracted by the State of California to coordinate lifelong services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families

Research – To investigate, as looking for the best way to begin making a dream come true

Round-Up Meeting – A coming together of all friends and family, artists, and business professionals to celebrate and create a new plan for the next few years

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**Sole Proprietorship** – A simple for-profit business owned and run by one person who may employ other people

**Vision** – What is projected for the future by enacting an organization's mission

**Volunteer** – A person who takes part in a project or organization without getting paid