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Exploring Life & Business with Rana Florida of The Creative Class Group



Hi Rana, so excited to have you on the platform. So before we get into questions about your work-life, maybe you can bring our readers up to speed on your story and how you got to where you are today?

As the daughter of hard-working Jordanian immigrants, I was taught to go to school, get good grades, continue onto graduate school and land a high paying job. Education was drilled in us and like many other immigrant parents, of course, they wanted my siblings and I to all be doctors or lawyers. But I wasn't interested in either profession, so I went onto business school and landed a high paying corporate job in Washington, DC. When I finally made it, I wasn't happy. I had no control over my time or schedule, I was suffering long commutes and felt no purpose or passion.

Then one day, BMW called and wanted to film a commercial based on my husband, Richard Florida's work on the Creative Class. He urged me to leave the safety net of my high paying job to take over as CEO of the Creative Class Group, the company he founded dedicated to making our cities better. But risk-taking was never part of our upbringing or education. So I was torn. But I took the leap of faith and I've been CEO for over 13 years now advising an amazing array of clients, from Converse, to Starwood Hotels, to Microsoft.

I'm sure you wouldn't say it's been obstacle free, but so far would you say the journey have been a fairly smooth road?

A startup is anything but! There are mountains and obstacles all along the way and the path is never paved. But the coolest part about launching your own company is that you get to build your own roads.

Thanks – so what else should our readers know about The Creative Class Group?

Our goal is to build better cities. We are a strategy firm comprised of leading researchers, thinkers, and business experts. Drawing on our own proprietary datasets, we advise corporations, governments, non-profits, and universities on topics ranging from economic development and growth, competitiveness, talent attraction and retention, real estate investment and locational strategy, and inclusivity and sustainability. Our approach centers on the proven research of my husband and urban theorist Richard Florida, author of the seminal book *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Making up about one-third of the U.S. workforce (much more in some cities), the Creative Class collects half of all wages and accounts for 70 percent of discretionary spending. No company, organization, or economy can afford to overlook it.

From Jerusalem to New York, CCG has helped cities small and large on five continents develop economic development strategies. We assisted BMW with its Ideas Class advertising campaign and advised Audi on its Urban Future Initiative, supported Art Basel's introduction of Art Basel Cities, and launched CityLab with The Atlantic. Cirque du Soleil hails CCG's research as its number one indicator for ticket sales. Starwood Hotels collaborated with our team on real estate expansion, marketing and branding. We have also helped Philips, Converse, Kraft and many other companies target the Creative Class in their marketing.

What matters most to you? Why?

Making our cities better places to live is at the heart of what we do and if we can advise corporations and government on how to do that, then we make the world a better place for everyone.