



OS Collectives

Who we are

Founded by Ozlem Tuskan and Susan Walbrook OS Collectives is a consultancy and movement dedicated to empowering creative entrepreneurs and leaders by helping them overcome their imposter syndrome. Through ongoing global research, we identify the real time barriers holding creative leaders and entrepreneurs back in today's world. Through talks and workshops, we enable creative leaders and entrepreneurs to recognise their true worth, build new mindset patterns and bring greater confidence to the table to unlock full creative potential.

Creativity in Crisis

Negative or toxic self-talk has become a pervasive problem and drives an even bigger issue: imposter syndrome: an underlying doubt when it comes to our skills, expertise, or self-worth. At its worst, the afflicted feel like fraudsters. One day, the world will recognise it, and call us out.

The creative industries, the very heart of global innovation and cultural dynamism, are grappling with a silent yet devastating challenge: imposter syndrome. This insidious condition, marked by relentless self-doubt and the haunting fear of being unmasked as a fraud, is wreaking havoc on creative professionals.

We wanted to dig deeper into Clance and Imes' 1978 coining of the term 'imposter Phenomenon' and apply it to current creative climates, ultimately to interrogate what would happen if we solved the mental and financial costs of imposter syndrome.

We needed to ask what happens when we are more forthcoming about the issue?

What happens when we understand its origins and how today's world will impact it?

When we find solutions for it rather than live with it.

Can we be a greater force for good?

Spark greater creative ideas as we chart the unknown?

Be more imaginative and inclusive?

Build greater more sustainable human businesses?

What could happen to creativity beyond imposter syndrome?

Key Findings

- The Silent Economic Killer

The Silent Economic Killer In the US alone, imposter syndrome cost the US economy \$0.96 trillion, potentially costing the UK £14 bn in lost productivity.

"In the creative industries, where innovation is the lifeblood, the economic toll of imposter syndrome is particularly alarming. We can't afford to let self-doubt stifle our most talented individuals"

Creative Director, Advertising Agency

- The Class Divide: Social Inequality and Self-Worth

The report emphasises the significant role of social class in exacerbating imposter syndrome. A startling 75% of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds reported feeling out of place in their professional environments.

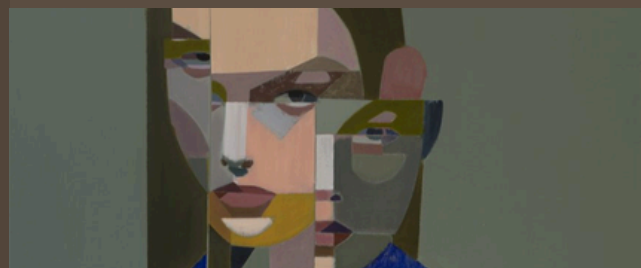
"If you have been to a private school, you are instilled with a different level of confidence. It's not about just putting responsibility on the individual to find intrinsic motivation, it's about looking at the role the system has to play"

Kian Baktiari, Founder, The People

- Gendered Shadows: The Gender Battle Against Imposter Syndrome

Research shows both men and women equally experience IP (49% of men and 51% women). However, the experience differs between the two; women tend to internalise their self-doubt, self-sabotaging and hesitating to seize opportunities, men may suppress or project their insecurities, adopting a mask of confidence while struggling internally. "Imposter syndrome is a result of consistent and persistent feedback. As a female founder, you have a choice: to make that strengthen your beliefs, or allow it to hurt your self-esteem"

Jo Forster, previously lead for the Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (an initiative by NatWest Group) and on the advisory board for the Pathways Forward in Scotland





The Research

Our findings are informed by over 60 x 1:1 in-depth qualitative interviews with creative professionals and entrepreneurs conducted over the last six months. We drew on experiences from professionals in fashion, advertising, architecture, marketing, TV & production, design, luxury, tech and lifestyle.

The Keynote

'For many leaders and entrepreneurs Imposter Syndrome is suffered in silence and is the key obstacle in them achieving their entrepreneurial or career goals.

This 1 hour keynote aims to inspire leaders to:

- Challenge their limiting beliefs,
- Recognise how external factors such as gender, diversity, culture and leadership plays a role
- Enable confidence to reach their full potential and future ambitions.

Specifically: How imposter syndrome is now normalised in society and the illusion it creates?

The cost of imposter syndrome on creativity, human potential and commercial performance?

How imposter syndrome manifests itself across creative industries and entrepreneurship today?

The real imposters - how society, DEI and leadership is breeding imposter syndrome?

What leaders need to do differently to create supportive and empowering cultures The future of imposter syndrome and the next generation?

Key Findings

- **Leading Through Uncertainty: The Power of Vulnerable Leadership**

Vulnerable leadership is the solution to this crisis; leaders who bravely share their own struggles with imposter syndrome foster environments of openness and trust, dismantling hierarchical barriers, allowing teams to express doubts and collaborate more fearlessly.

“Training leaders to share their own vulnerabilities makes them more forgiving, and encourages teams to more readily approach them. Companies flourish when leaders express their human traits”

Jo DiSante, VP of Current Programming, ABC Entertainment

- **Seeds of Doubt: Educational Interventions for the Young**

Training educators to spot and support student grappling with self-doubt can prevent these toxic feelings from taking root, nurturing a generation of resilient and confident individuals.

“Our educational institutions should normalise struggle and failure. We need a framework to mitigate the negative effects of imposter syndrome, both in education and business”

Dr. Knatokie Ford, Founder and CEO of Fly Sci Enterprise and former Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) during the Obama Administration, TEDx Speaker on Imposter Syndrome

Research Report

Creativity in Crisis: The Hidden Cost of Imposter Syndrome & The Inner Critic

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