

Acting Edition

BUSINESS IDEAS

by Milo Cramer

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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~~Business ideas??~~
~~Bu\$ine\$\$ Idea\$~~
~~Biz nas Ideaz~~
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BUSINESS IDEAS was first produced by The Alliance Theater in Atlanta, GA, in November 2024. The performance was directed by Matt Torney, with sets by Chika Shimizu, costumes by April Andrew Carswell, lights by Alberto Segarra, sound by Jimmy Garver, and stage management by Rodney Williams. The cast was as follows:

LISA Devon Hales
GEORGINA Courtenay Collins
PATTY Michelle Pokopac
CUSTOMERS Courtney Patterson

BUSINESS IDEAS was subsequently produced by Clubbed Thumb in New York City in June 2025. The performance was directed by Laura Dupper, with sets by Emmie Finckel, costumes by Avery Reed, lights by Emily Clarkson, sound by Caroline Eng, and stage management by Andie Burns. The cast was as follows:

LISA Laura Scott Carey
GEORGINA Annie McNamara
PATTY Brittany Bradford
CUSTOMERS Mary Wiseman

BUSINESS IDEAS was developed through the Mabou Mines Resident Artist Program and Clubbed Thumb’s directing fellowship, directed by Andrés Lopez-Alicea. It was further supported by Cygnet Theater’s Finish Line Commission and the University of California, San Diego.

CHARACTERS

LISA – a teenager

GEORGINA – her mom

PATTY – their server

CUSTOMERS – all played by one actor

SETTING

a café.

a cute café where you can work on your MacBook ;)

lots of coffee kitsch? i.e.:

SIP HAPPENS

STRESSED, BLESSED, AND COFFEE OBSESSED

HOT STUFF

AUTHOR'S NOTES

There are multiple ways the casting of these four roles can break down racially, each with different connotations – I hope casting choices are made collaboratively wherever the play is performed.

Some of the customers are men, but none of the actors are. Lisa and/or Patty might be nonbinary; Georgina wouldn't know what that means.

Props should be either functional or emotional – tiny sugar packets, an old mop, Post-It notes. There is no need for literal coffee equipment.

Love and gratitude to my family.

1. Slowww Customer

(**SLOWWW CUSTOMER** *is kind of a bro.*
PATTY *at work behind the counter. Six a.m.*)

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. (*Molasses.*) ...do I order here? or

PATTY. order?

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. ...huh?

PATTY. do you “order”?

or do you ask politely

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. okay, what do I *want*. hmmmmmm

(*Pause.*)

PATTY. is it o/kay if I –

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. (*Hey crazy question:.*) what do you like?

PATTY. ...coffee.

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. yeah but coffee’s not really my *thing*

hey. haha.

you’re funny. “coffee.”

hey, how’s your day going?

PATTY. fine.

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. yeah well mine’s a piece of shit.

OK, what do I *want*.

Hmmmmmmmmmm

(Pause.)

PATTY. can I go do something else?

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. huh?

PATTY. can I go do something else while you make up your mind?

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. aren't you here all day?

like "haha I'm here all day"

like that's what they usually say?

like "haha I'm not going anywhere"

PATTY. I just want to walk five feet that way

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. *(Genuinely confused -)* but I'm a customer

(Long pause.)

PATTY. can I ask you a question?

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. *(A revelation! Miraculous.)* Tea!
I'll have "tea."

PATTY. what do you *do*?

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. I try not to do anything, ha.

PATTY. but like

what's your job?

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. *(Like a TED Talk.)* why is everyone so obsessed with work?

who cares what I "do"?

could any question be more boring?

ask me something real, I dare you.

ask me what I love.

PATTY. (*Retreating, mechanical, putting up a wall, dead inside.*) nevermind that'll be five seventy-five we're cashless we don't take cash feel free to tip or not tip totally up to you milks are on the side bathroom code is 1111 thanks so much have a good one.

SLOWWW CUSTOMER. (*Ashamed.*) if you must know

...

I'm a kindergarten teacher

2. Mother Daughter Team

(**LISA**, *half-asleep, miserable, stands where SLOWWW CUSTOMER stood* -)

LISA. (*The first of many echoes.*) do we -
order here? or

PATTY. order?

LISA. huh

PATTY. do you “order”?
or do you ask politely

(**GEORGINA** *arrives like a bullet train or like a sneaky spy* -)

GEORGINA. I think we just...take a seat

LISA. we haven't ordered anything?

GEORGINA. shhh it's kinda fun, it's like a heist

LISA. we'll get kicked out -

GEORGINA. I brought supplies.

LISA. we're in public (?)

(**GEORGINA** *starts setting up* -)

GEORGINA. The time has come. For you and me. To start a business.

LISA. it's 6 a.m.

GEORGINA. this is the kinda place people Start Businesses.

LISA. ...this place?

GEORGINA. “Cool” it's “Cool”

LISA. a “Business”?

GEORGINA. Mother Daughter Team.

Mother Daughter Team.

How sexy is that?

(Beat.)

do you wanna go to college or not.

LISA. I didn't know

that was like

in question.

...

is that in question?

3. Anxious Customer

(ANXIOUS CUSTOMER gets too close? Never leaves home? Is a hoarder.)

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. you forgot to Stamp me?

PATTY. ...“stamp” you?

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. Stamp me!

...Stamp me, Stamp my Stamp card?

I got two coffees, you owe me two coffee Stamps.

PATTY. so,

company policy is No Free Stamps.

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. free? haha. no.

you *owe me* Stamps.

PATTY. company policy –

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. it costs you nothing.

it costs you nothing to Stamp my Stamp card

PATTY. I'll get in trouble

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. are you a child? are-you-a-robot?

PATTY. I'm an employee

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. I'm a human person.

you have the opportunity to do something nice.

PATTY. why is this impor/tant to you (?)

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. it's just frustrating because I have twenty half-full Stamp cards at home, I keep losing them.

I don't know what's wrong with me.

PATTY. I've never seen you before

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. are you new here?

(Pause.)

are you new here? because
this is kind of my local spot

PATTY. *(Very delicately?)* I've worked here. for five years.

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. are you like the weekend girl?

(Pause! Pain.)

PATTY. no. I am not like the “weekend” “girl”

I am like the six days a week, ten hours a day, nine
dollars an hour plus tips
...adult.

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. it's not like a real adult job-job,
though, is it?

PATTY. well what do you do, freak?

because I'm actually –

*(Catching herself, switching from angry to
network-y.)*

seeking other employment

ANXIOUS CUSTOMER. I'm a therapist

4. Crepe (Crape?) Cart

GEORGINA. you – are gonna to look so cute –
 in a little yellow apron –
 with a little yellow umbrella –
 manning our very own crepe cart
 downtown!
 we could even just do weekends

LISA. ...first we need to figure out if it's pronounced "crepe"
 or "crape"

GEORGINA. crepe

LISA. crape, no / crape

GEORGINA. crepe.

creee–

GEORGINA.

–ep

–ep

LISA.

–ape

crap

GEORGINA. but I have a French friend a real French friend
 who says crepe

LISA. google says crape

GEORGINA. but crepe *sounds* better

LISA. you think I want to stand

at some heavy ass cart

and pour, what, *batter*?

for asshole strangers? for ten hours?

GEORGINA. everyone's gonna have a crush on you.

LISA. while you do what.

GEORGINA. Strategy.

Image management.

LISA. sitting in air conditioning –

GEORGINA. from each according to her ability,

to each according to her need.

LISA. but I wanna do something cool

GEORGINA. you're just afraid of hard work

of accepting a position that compromises your entitlement

but newsflash –

(LISA isn't paying attention.)

LISA. mom sorry I can't pay attention when you talk about this business stuff like at all.

like one major class barrier I can identify right now...

is just how boring this stuff is

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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