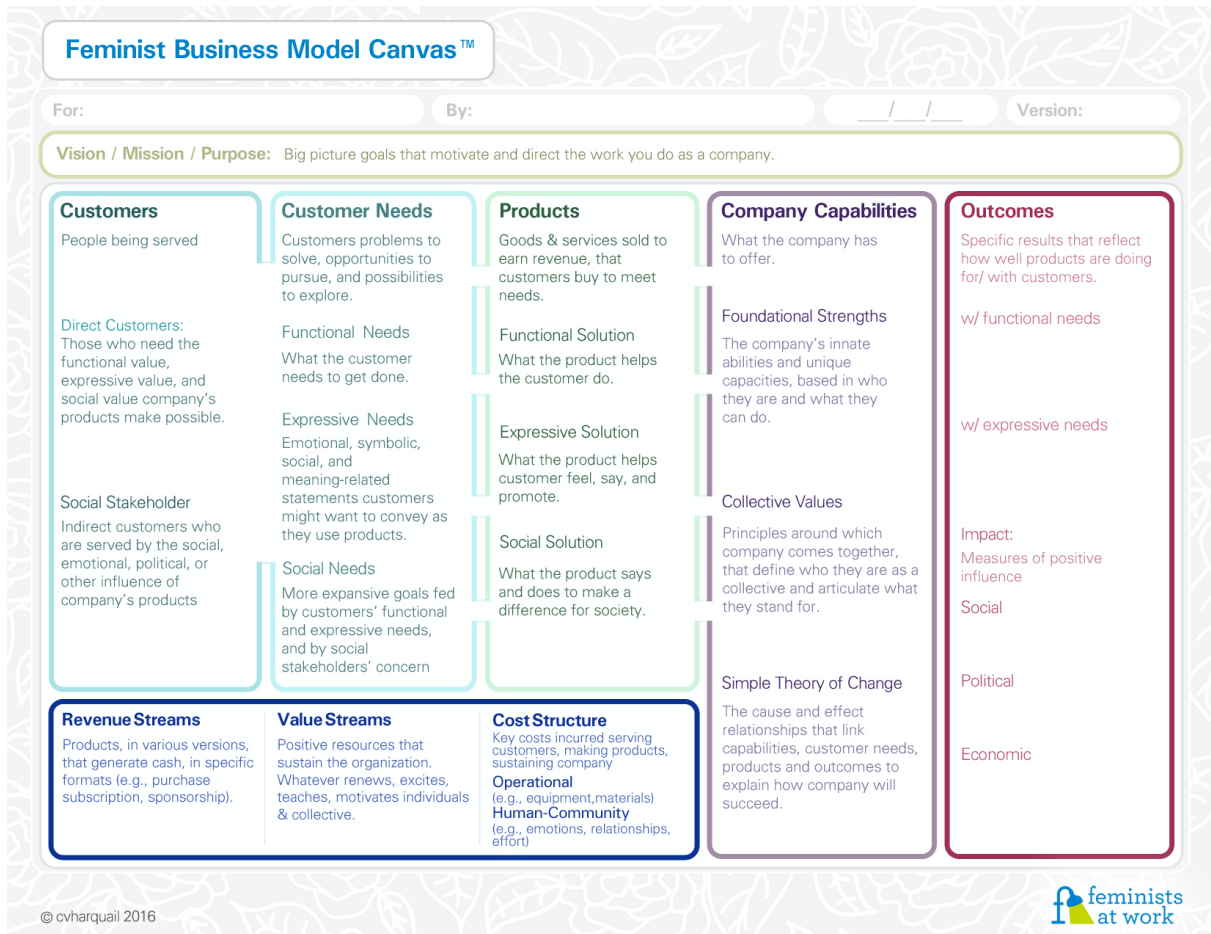


Example of the Feminist Business Model Canvas™ Foundation Step: Safety Pin Box



Safety Pin Box: Marissa & Leslie

Feminist Business Model Canvas™

Vision / Mission / Purpose: Provide \$ Capital to Black & activists



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What Does a Feminist Business Model Canvas look like, for a real business?

This handout unfolds an example of a foundational “first sketch” of a feminist business model for a real-life company: The Safety Pin Box. The Safety Pin Box company, co-founded by Marissa Johnson and Leslie Mac, operated profitably from 2016 to 2018.

The Safety Pin Box example applies the process and questions that generate a Foundation FBMC to show how a team can uncover all twelve pieces they’ll need for a complete feminist revenue model. This foundational sketch helps the team to see consistencies and gaps in their thinking, as well as to recognize opportunities for more mutually reinforcing design decisions.

Please note: This example does not represent the answers of the actual SPB team. I completed this Introductory Tour of the SPB Feminist Business Model ‘as if’ I were a member of Marissa and Leslie’s team. I drew from interviews of the co-founders as well as from SPB’s own site (when it was still fully active).

Note also: I don't claim that my answers from SPB's perspective are the same as what Marissa and Leslie's team might have generated themselves. They are 'good enough' to illustrate the SPB company with strong fidelity as well as good enough to illustrate how the FBMC can help a team understand their full idea.

In this example, the segments and their top-level questions are presented in black text. Sample answers from Safety Pin Box are presented in blue text. Imagine that the SPB team has just typed their answers into the FBMC Foundation worksheet that they downloaded from cvharquail.com.

1. VISION ~ MISSION ~ PURPOSE

Given who we are as a company, what we have available to offer, what we care about, and what we want to do to make a difference:

- What change/s to we want to make, socially politically and/or economically, through our business activities?

The mission and purpose of SPB is twofold: First, to teach interested white people how to be effective anti-racism advocates, and second, to provide financial capital – real money -- to Black women activists who are working for racial justice.

2. COMPANY CAPABILITIES

Company capabilities form the heart of the feminist business model. They are strengths our business can employ and the gifts we can contribute.

Collective, Identity-Based Values: values define who we are and articulate what we stand for.

- What values do we hold dear as a community?
- What values define us and set us apart from other businesses?

At SPB, we believe that:

- Black lives matter.
- Actions matter.
- People can learn how to be advocates and how to fight racism.
- Activism is valuable, no matter who it comes from.
- Everyone is needed in the fight for justice.
- People value what they pay for, and advocacy and justice is valuable work that people should be paid to do.

Foundational Strengths: innate abilities and unique capacities.

- What qualities define our organization and people?
- What collective qualities and capabilities make us as a company especially relevant, capable, insightful, etc. regarding our customers and their needs? Regarding the products we want to create and messages we want to demonstrate through them?
 - We define ourselves as womanists – Black feminists dedicated to intersectional approaches to racial justice.
 - We have experience as on-the-ground activists, recently through our involvement in Black Lives Matter/ Movement for Black Lives, as well as through our lifetimes. We are experts at understanding racism and at activism.
 - As co-founders, we have professional experience in marketing and in teaching.
 - We have a sense of humor—we think that activism can be fun and enjoyable as well as hard work.

3. CUSTOMERS

For every feminist (or values-driven, social impact) business model, there are two groups of customers: **direct customers** and **social stakeholders**.

Direct customers are interested all the values that our products have to offer. They are the folks who buy our product.

- Who are the customers of our material product who will *also* be receptive to the social values we want our product to express?
- Can we demonstrate our company/collective values by the choice of customers to serve?

Our customers are privileged white adults in the USA who want to do real work to fight anti-Black racism. They want to “show up” and “do the work” in ways that are effective and make a difference. They have enough disposable income that they can afford to pay to be taught (as well as able to afford the time to do activism). They believe they can learn. They believe that what they do can make a difference. They understand that racism in the US is a problem created by white people that must be solved by white people, and that white people need to listen to the leadership of Black feminists and womanists.

Social stakeholders are indirect customers, who might affirm, validate, and share the meaning-related elements of our products.

- Who might appreciate the social value and changes we want our products to promote?
- Who cares about the people who are our direct customers, and wants to help them succeed?
 - **The Black Community** is the primary beneficiary of the solution we are offering to interested white people. They generally don't want or need to help white people be anti-racists, but they do need white people to take responsibility for racial justice.
 - **Black women activists** will be supported financially by the proceeds of SPB, and will also have their hard work reinforced by our customers' advocacy.
 - **Social justice organizations** and initiatives will get active support.
 - **White people** in general will benefit from their group members' advocacy.

Note: In the FBMC, customer needs and product-based solutions get broken into two dimensions: functional and expressive. The functional dimension captures the material needs that customers want products to solve, and the functional job that the product gets done. The expressive dimension captures the feelings, meanings and statements that customers want to make, and that the product helps them feel, say, or demonstrate.

4. CUSTOMER NEEDS

Customer needs are not only the problems customers want to solve, but also the opportunities they want to pursue, and the possibilities they want to explore.

- Functionally, what do our customers need, to support them towards their individual (and maybe group) goals?
- Expressively, how might customers want to feel as they use our products? To communicate to themselves and others about who they are and what they care about?
- What social problems could be resolved if our individual customers' needs were met? How would changes for that one customer or group positively impact the people/ social stakeholders around them?

Our customers are privileged white adults in the USA who want to do real work to fight anti-Black racism. They have enough disposable income that they can afford to pay to be taught (as well as able to afford the time to do activism).

(functional need) They need/want to “show up” and “do the work” in ways that are effective and make a difference. They don’t really know what to do and they absolutely don’t want to do the “wrong” kinds of things. So, they need to be taught and they need to be directed – given actionable ideas for real advocacy

(expressive need) These white people want to communicate to themselves and others that they recognize that racism is a problem created by white people and that white people must dismantle racism but do it in ways that reflect the priorities, wisdom, and expertise of Black feminists. They need to be able to prove (to themselves and others?) that the work they are doing goes beyond good intentions. They also need to be supported in doing this work because it is hard.

If our customers actually knew what to do and how to do it, and then actually went out and did this work, they would become more effective anti-racism activists. Their work would also support the ongoing work of the Black community, and possibly help to motivate other white people to get involved.

5. PRODUCTS

“Products” includes both things and services, tangibles and intangibles, and functional tools as well as expressive ones.

- What kinds of physical things or services could meet the *functional* needs of our customers?
- What physical and service elements of these product ideas could meet the *emotional* needs of our customers?
- What would we like our customers to convey to others as they use or purchase this product?

Functional:

- The SPB will offer monthly, themed educational readings to teach users about different elements of racism and anti-racist work. These readings will help them with their advocacy tasks and help them build foundational knowledge as anti-racists.
- Each month advocates will get a set of tasks to perform locally, and be expected to report back to the Fb community and SBP what they did and what they accomplished.
- A Facebook community (must pay to participate) will create community among activists and help them share ideas, support each other, and teach each other, thus easing the burden on Black feminists.

- Three levels of membership boxes to fit three levels of energy

More broadly and socially, SPB products will create a network of white anti-racism activists who are doing work that is smart and makes a real contribution, without draining the energy of Black activists. Paying Black activists for their work shows that this work has value.

Expressive:

- Customers can purchase boxes one at a time, and they can give gift boxes to others. To demonstrate their ongoing commitment to anti-racism work, customers can sign up for 3, 6, and 12-month subscriptions.
- The subscription’s commitment plus the Facebook group helps them build ongoing relationships with each other.
- Reporting back helps them keep track of their results and feel like they are making a difference.

6. STRUCTURE

Cost Structure: The cost structure brings together all costs incurred to make the business model work. The FMBC invites you to *consider what human beings spend and invest individually, collectively, and as a community to create products and to pursue purpose.*

- **Material Costs:** What are the fundamental material and process costs critical to our business model?
- **Human Costs:** What does producing our product with this business model while pursuing our collective purpose cost us emotionally, physically, and/or cognitively?

Material costs include:

- Boxes, printed materials
- Stuffing and mailing costs
- Time spent connecting with Social Justice organizations to confirm what they need advocates to do

Human costs of this business:

- Our expertise. Our energy.
- We are putting our personal reputations on the line, especially in social media and in interviews.
- We will be drawing a lot on our network of relationships and need to take care of these relationships and people’
- We will experience haters and critics. We will have to find ways to manage customers’ emotions, frustrations, fears, and questions.

Revenue Streams: different ways that your business generates real money.

- Considering the primary products and services that we offer, what are the different possible ways we might package these and sell them?

Revenue streams include

- Sales of individual boxes and gift boxes
- Subscription sales (aka memberships)
- Sales of SPB and anti-racism merchandise (t shirts, tote bags, books)

Value Streams: unique to the Feminist Business Model Canvas, value streams are the flows of positive resources that your business model generates — *beyond the cash* — that help to sustain you as an organization.

- Think about the social, human value that we create that goes directly to our customers. Consider all the other values, behaviors, emotions, conversations, or other elements that we experience as we pursue our business model. What are these? Which of these are important to us as a company?
- What are some of the positive things we feel or do, individually or collectively, as part of creating our product? Which of these renew us collectively and individually, give us hope, satisfy us, excite us, help us learn, and more?

Value Streams: SPB will generate additional value including:

- Knowledge of anti-racism and advocacy
- Energy towards advocacy
- Ending or at least reducing white guilt and superficial performances
 - Good feelings that you are doing something useful
 - Track record of effective advocacy to show what works

7. OUTCOMES: specific results that we can concretely track.

Outcomes need to be tuned specifically to the customers, products, and purpose of each unique company. Thus, we offer just a few suggestions to start you off:

- How might we measure success at meeting Customers' functional needs? (E.g., Customer satisfaction specifically about the needs identified)

Outcomes re: functional needs met:

- Number of boxes sold
- Number of subscriptions sold
- Length of subscriptions sold
- Repeat customers, renewals
- Reports of completed advocacy actions

- Customer feedback on regular surveys
 - Number of Black women activists we are able to support w/ \$
- How might we measure the company's success in meeting Customers' symbolic needs? (E.g., Positive behavior or attitude change for customers)

Outcomes re: expressive needs:

- Engagement in Fb community, frequency, average number of likes per post
 - Quality of comments (e.g., positive emotions, “aha”s, advice offered)
 - Offers of connection (e.g., let me help you)
 - Fb comments and posts where members teach each other
 - Purchases of merchandise, photos of members wearing merch
- How might we measure success with having a positive impact on the larger issue or purpose we are pursuing? (E.g., Increase use of terms and phrases your messaging has promoted, changes in the amount and ways allies are reinforcing your message)

Outcomes re: larger social impact:

- Reports of impact from allied social justice organizations
- Newspaper/online media reports mentioning SPB actions/members
- SPB members taking direct roles in Social Justice Organizations
- SPB members taking part in other anti-racism groups
- Number of Black women activists we can support \$

Simple Theory of Change

A “theory of change” is an argument for how an enterprise will help its constituents and turn its resources and relationships into larger social change. It helps your business articulate the steps by which you hope to achieve your purpose and connect to your bigger goal. By outlining the cause and effect relationships within a business model, a theory of change helps us clarify what we hope to influence, and how.

The FBMC asks you to put together your Simple Theory of Change (STOC) by filling in the blanks of a pre-crafted statement, along the lines of completing a Mad Libs game. Filling in the blanks creates a sensible but roughly stated cause and effect chain. The rough first draft needs to be polished up by smoothing out the connecting statements.

The example, below, shows the connecting statements (e.g., “Because we emphasize”, and model segments (e.g., core values) in black text. A first draft of input from the Safety Pin Box example responses is shown in blue text. For reference, the form is repeated

Because the Simple Theory of Change statement can be rather long, you can condense it into a sentence or two so that you can fit it on your Canvas. (E.g., For SPB, the super-short STOC might be “If we draw on our expertise as activists to teach white people how to advocate against racism, we can support the anti-racism work of the Black Community and financially support Black feminist activists.”)

Simple Theory of Change for Safety Pin Box: first draft

Because we emphasize that all People can learn how to be advocates and how to fight racism, that activism is valuable no matter who it comes from, and that people value what they pay for (*core values*),

and because we are able to draw on our expertise as Womanists with on-the-ground experience as anti-racism activists, as well as our professional experience in marketing and in teaching (*foundational strength*),

We’ll build a product that meets the needs of privileged white adults in the USA who want to do real work to fight anti-Black racism (*direct customer*). These white people want to/need to “show up” and “do the work” in ways that are effective and make a difference (*functional need*).

They/ Our customers also need to listen to the leadership of Black feminists and womanists and behave as allies to feel like part of the solution instead of guilty, recognizing that racism in the US is a problem created by white people that must be solved by white people (*expressive need*),

which will help customers to learn how to advocate and get real direction in what they do can make a difference (*customers' goals*).

With these needs met, customers will be able to learn to advocate as anti-racists in ways that also help shift our cultural conversation about anti-racism and get more white people involved (*social need*).

At the same time, The Safety Pin Box (our product) will help The Black Community (*social stakeholders*) to/by giving them more allies and impact (*stakeholders' need*). The Safety Pin Box/ our product) will help Black women activists (*social stakeholders*) to be compensated financially for their work. (*stakeholders' need*).

Our company will be able to sustain itself because we can generate more revenue through sales of boxes, subscriptions, and merchandise (*revenue streams*) than we spend in designing action plans, printing materials, and shipping boxes (*material costs*). And we will be able to sustain our purpose of teaching white people to be anti-racism activists and financially supporting Black women activists (*mission*), despite the human costs of this work, because we will generate the activist knowledge, expertise, energy, and sense of effectiveness (*human values stream*) to replenish us.

Finally, to demonstrate and keep track our positive contributions, we will measure Number of boxes, number of subscriptions, merchandize sold (*metrics, 'biz' outcomes*) to show that interested and committed white people's need to learn to be activists (*needs*) have been met.

We will also gather social proof of positive energy and helping actions in the Facebook group and through activists' reports (*expressive outcomes*) to show that customers' desire to demonstrate commitment and learning (*expressive needs*) have been met. To demonstrate our social impact, we will keep track of reports of participations and connection, (*social*), action-reports on impact (*political*), and how Black women who receive our grants are benefitting from this funding (*economic influence*) to assess how we're doing on our plan to get white people involved in anti-racism work and financially support Black women activists (*vision, mission and purpose*).

Theory of Change – “Fill in the blanks with your uniqueness”

Because we emphasize ___ (*core values*), and we are able to ___ (*foundational strength*), we’ll build a product that meets ___ (*direct customer*)’s ___ (*functional need*) as well as their ___ (*expressive need*), helping customers to ___ (*customers’ goals*).

With these needs met, customers will be able to ___ (*need*) in ways that also help ___ (*social need*). At the same time, (our product) will help ___ (*social stakeholders*) to ___ (*stakeholders’ need*).

Our company will be able to sustain itself because we can generate more revenue through ___ (*revenue streams*) than we spend in ___ (*material costs*). And we will be able to sustain our purpose of ___ (*mission*), despite the human costs of this work, because we will generate the ___ (*human values stream*) to replenish us.

Finally, to demonstrate and keep track our positive contributions, we will measure ___ (*metrics, ‘biz’ outcomes*) to show ___ (*needs*) have been met. We will also gather social proof of ___ (*expressive outcomes*) to show ___ (*expressive needs*) have been met. To demonstrate our social impact, we will keep track of ___ (*social*), ___ (*political*), and ___ (*economic influence*) to assess how we’re doing on our ___ (*vision, mission and purpose*).

Next Steps for Safety Pin Box:

No “first sketch” of a feminist business model can tell us a business’s full story. And, a short pass through the very top-level questions for each segment of the FBMC only gives you a rough picture of how all the pieces of a business idea might fit together.

Thus, this “first sketch” of the SPB business model canvas doesn’t tell us everything about their business’s mechanisms and goals. Nor does it tell the story perfectly and seamlessly -- yet. Rather, the FBMC shapes the SPB story in a way that’s **comprehensive, insightful, and organized**. As a result, the business model is now easy to convey to others and to analyze together.

To learn more about the Feminist Business Model Canvas and other feminist business tools and practices, connect with me at cvharquail.com. Sign up for my newsletter on Feminism & Business at <http://cvharquail.com>. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram: @cvharquail

Wearing a Safety Pin	Safety Pin Box Subscription
• Focuses on the wearer	• Focuses on supporting Black people
• Costs little to nothing, financially and emotionally	• Financially supports Black women while facilitating personal growth
• “Allyship” defined by white people	• “Allyship” defined by Black women
• Doesn’t require any learning or self-education	• Actively encourages self-education every month
• Can be worn in isolation	• Connects you to a network of other white people tangibly supporting Black liberation
• Can be adopted by white supremacists to harm marginalized people	• Does not harm oppressed people, cannot be co-opted by neo-nazis
• Is a one-time minimal effort	• Is an ongoing monthly commitment to supporting Black people
• Leaves little room for accountability	• Encourages accountability through evaluation of tasks completed and direction from Black women
• Does not make a tangible, measurable difference in the movement for Black lives	• Gives you measurable, meaningful work to contribute to the movement for Black lives
• Does not encourage self-reflection	• Will allow you to see in one year what you have contributed and how you have changed
• Encourages other white people to wear safety pins	• Encourages other white people to do tangible ally work and support Black women both in money and deed
• Creates holes in clothing	• Gives you a cute box every month

Safety Pin Box: Marissa Leslie

Feminist Business Model Canvas™

Vision / Mission / Purpose: Provide & Capital to Black & Activists

Customers

- Privileged Whites who want to "show up" effectively
- Can pay to be taught
- See Racism as their problem

Customer Needs

- Don't want to do it wrong
- Don't want to feel guilty
- Want to demonstrate commitment
- Privilege for good?

Products

Functional Solution

- Monthly tasks
- Fb community
- Readings + lessons

Expressive Solution

- Subscription = Commitment
- Fb group creates energy + meaning

Company Capabilities

Foundational Strengths

- Womenists
- Black lives Matter experience
- Marketing
- Humor

Collective Values

- Actions matter
- People can learn
- Activism is valuable
- Everyone is needed
- People value what they pay for

Outcomes

w/ functional needs

- # of boxes
- length of subscription
- Reports of completed action

w/ expressive needs

- Engagement in community
- Allyship
- teaching others

Impact: Social, political, economic

- Reports of impact
- Relationships
- larger community
- Supported ♀

Social Stakeholder

- Black community
- Black activists
- Whites
- Soc justice Org

Social Need

- needs help
- need to be valued
- need to be heard
- need move activism

Social Solution

- network of white activists who contribute + don't drain
- \$ to Activists = Value

Revenue Streams

- Salary
- memberships
- march

Value Streams

- knowledge
- energy
- effective activism
- reports

Cost Structure

- materials
- time/haters
- expertise
- network requests

Simple Theory of Change



Feminist Business Model Canvas™

Vision / Mission / Purpose:

