DataBird Business Journal

CEO OF THE WEEK

CEO OF THE WEEK: AN INTERVIEW WITH RANA FLORIDA

DATABIRD BUSINESS JOURNAL

As Chief Executive Officer of the Creative Class Group, Rana Florida manages new business development, marketing, consulting, research and global operations serving such diverse clients as BMW, Converse, IBM, Cirque du Soleil, Audi, Zappos, and Starwood Hotels — to name just a few.

Well known as a writer on business and leadership – for Fast Company, Inc.com, and the Huffington Post – Rana has also served as a guest business analyst on The Today Show. and MSNBC's, The Cycle, has been a Fox News contributor for several years, and has been featured in The New York Times and in interviews for The Wall Street Journal, Market Watch, CNN, Vogue Magazine, The Globe and Mail and more.

Her one-on-one high profile interviews have covered notables – from President Bill Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama to tennis great Andre Agassi– and many more.

Her book, Upgrade—Taking Your Work and Life From Ordinary to Extraordinary (McGraw Hill, 2013) was a 'Business Best Seller,' by Tattered Cover, the largest independent bookstore retailer in the U.S. and The Globe and Mail, Editor's Pick.

Q: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR PRESENT INDUSTRY AT THIS TIME?

My husband, Richard Florida founded the theory of the Creative Class and his work was exploding in the business realm. I decided to join the organization to lead the business development side. I knew he had great theories and research which could really help organizations and regions grow. We have been fortunate to work with all sorts of clients from mayors, to cities, to top brands like Starwood Hotels, to BMW to Converse.

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~ Rana Florida

Rana Florida and Richard Florida

Q: WHAT IS THE BEST/WORST MOMENT YOU CAN REMEMBER IN YOUR CAREER?

I was taught from a young age to stay on the linear path of life, to get good grades, go to school and onto graduate school and land a high paying corporate job. And I did just that, but I was miserable. I had no control over my time or schedule. So when I decided to take a huge risk and leave a steady job and paycheck to join my husband in launching our consulting company, I was terrified and thrilled at the same time!

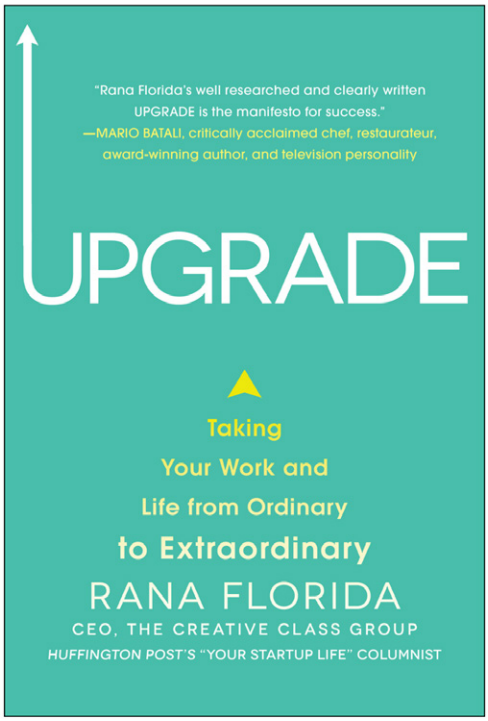
Q: WHO IS YOUR ROLE MODEL OR HERO?

My father. He left his family behind in Jordan with only $120 in his wallet to study and make a better life for himself in the states. He wasn't afraid of failure and wasn't afraid to take risks.

Rana Florida

Q: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK?

Rise of the Creative Class, by Richard Florida, of course!



Rana Florida's best selling *book* "UPGRADE"

Q: DO YOU USE ANY SPECIFIC METHOD OR SYSTEM TO RUN DAILY OPERATIONS OF YOUR BUSINESS?

There is no more separation of work and life, the lines have completely blurred. As an entrepreneur and a mom, I'm always on, I work from anywhere at anytime. We have two young kids and to buy freedom, I'm taking calls with Mayor's offices from the playground, talking to clients from the back of ubers and conference calls from art class.

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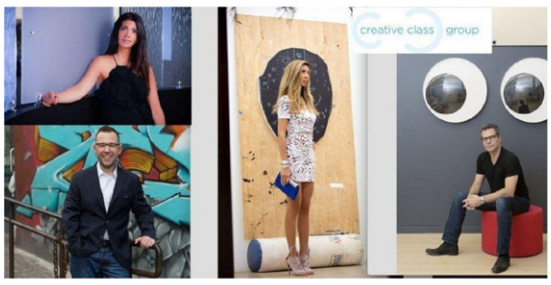

Creative Class Group

Q: LOOKING BACK - IF YOU COULD ADVISE A YOUNGER VERSION OF YOURSELF TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT - WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Take more risks!