

# Creo - empowering Christian entrepreneurs to become better leaders and build amazing ventures

*Duncan McFadzean introduces his organisation. After leaving a responsible job in banking, he felt God was calling him to create a special social enterprise. But it didn't work, as he did not know his own weaknesses. Instead, he found success in training Christian entrepreneurs in acquiring the skills they lacked. The courses are digital, and so permit study anywhere. Duncan gives examples of small businesses which followed the course and found success.*

In April 2008 I quit my job working for one of the largest banks in Scotland. I was responsible for around £3bn of the bank's capital, sat on boards of companies that employed hundreds and regularly worked on nine-figure transactions. Weeks later I found myself working out my notice, being flown around the UK by helicopter with three others, looking at assets the bank had funded and working with a CEO where the level of profitability of his company was over £100m.

I left because I believed I could serve God's mission better in a different context. I had been inspired by the story of the Prison Entrepreneurship Programme in Cleveland, Texas. I dreamt of creating a social business (a limited company with a social purpose) that created micro-businesses, generated profits and distributed these to bring about positive social change for those most in need in society. I finally felt I had found the way to integrate my experience (business, finance, entrepreneurship, investment) with who I was (creative, a giver, happy to operate outside the norms) and my passions (to use business as a force for good, to help those that had not had enough opportunity).

All of this was propelled by my faith and my heart to pursue my part in God's work.

It sounded wonderful; I was almost evangelistic (and proud) of my ambitions when I did my final leaving speech. I was off to save the world; joined by over 22 great people working across four ventures in the following three years.

But it didn't work.

When the time came to admit this in 2011, my friends were gracious enough to point to the positives, of which there were many, and to blame the financial crisis, which was not to blame. In reality, I lacked competency in many skills, I didn't know my own weaknesses and had equated inspiration with right timing and direction.

In hindsight, I have realised that my experience is common amongst entrepreneurs. I believe that Christian entrepreneurs face three main problems:

- They lack some of the competencies to run a business, including hiring, managing, sales, navigating legal cases and working with a challenging board or a difficult investor.
- They long for a trusted, wise voice to share their struggles with—whether personal or business-related.
- They lack a community of fellow Christian entrepreneurs who can sympathise with the loneliness or disappointments.

Rich Robinson and I launched Creo in response to these challenges. Creo exists to establish a community of Christian entrepreneurs who have the competency, character and Christlikeness to build amazing ventures that are redemptive. We are an accelerator, based in the UK and delivered digitally to increase accessibility, scalability and quality of content.

I need to explain our use of the word 'ventures'. We have a strong belief that Creo is not just about making Christian entrepreneurs better leaders - we also want to help them build great companies and charities and social enterprises. Venture is the word we found to encompass all three types of structure. It also fits with the venture capital world, where the focus is often on early stage, entrepreneurial, creative and disruptive models. We sometimes use "ventures" too to describe the people doing the programme, as there may be a team, and not just an individual entrepreneur involved.

We run two programmes - our nine-week Accelerator and a nine-month Lab, which include Theology, Formation, Execution and Impact from speakers such as Krish Kandiah, David Stroud, Alan Hirsch, the current