



How to Become a Producer

Oliver DeMille

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About The Center for Social Leadership

The Center for Social Leadership (CSL) is a think tank and action organization dedicated to building [social leaders](#) for the 21st Century.

Humanity is experiencing dramatic changes. Traditional leadership is broken. Conventional human organization based on hierarchies and formal authority is outdated. Technology has transformed the way we interact and enhanced our ability to have impact—for good or ill. The Center for Social Leadership was formed to steer these changes to improve the health of society, preserve freedom, and ensure peace and prosperity for humanity. A new vision of leadership is needed. Not the old, hierarchical, positional, authoritative, privileged-elite leadership, but a new democratic, action-determined, service-oriented leadership. Through this social leadership mankind can achieve unprecedented happiness and fulfillment.

Learn more and engage with CSL by [reading our e-book](#) and joining our mailing list at www.TheSocialLeader.com.

“It’s not about someone doing everything. It’s about everyone doing something.”



Producers are the most important citizens, as Thomas Jefferson put it. Actually, the word he used was farmers—specifically, “tillers of the soil.” By producing food, farmers obviously had an important role in successful society. But Jefferson meant more than this.

Because farmers lived close to the land, they were self-reliant with respect to their own survival and received an income from providing indispensable basic needs for others. [This made them more independent](#) than people of other occupations. If hard times came, they tightened their belts and lived off their farms. In contrast, during the same challenges, most city dwellers and even shop owners were more likely to turn to the government or upper classes for help.

The founding generation was sensitive to the level of dependency of the European populace. The small but incredibly powerful upper class was the only group that could live off their assets and make it through hard times like war, economic depression, or pandemic. Because of this, the upper class was independent while everyone else was dependent on the upper classes and government.

Since the first focus of human societies is to survive, the power to survive independently was seen as true independence. Indeed, the War of Independence had this deeper meaning to founding Americans: They were finally independent of the



European upper class.

Dependents *versus* Independents

In our day, [nearly all citizens are dependent](#) on an employer or the government. One way to rate one's level of independence might be to measure how long you can survive, feed your family, and live in your home after your employer stops paying you anything. Some people are two-year independents, while others are three-year independents or two-month independents, and so on. It is not unlikely that most Americans are absolute dependents, living paycheck to paycheck or on government support.

The triple entendre here is interesting. At a time where the growth of [political independents](#) is helping lessen the dangers of a two-party monopoly on American politics, there is a need for more people to become true *economic independents* (people who can survive indefinitely without a paycheck). As both of these grow, the level of American *independence* will increase.

Any level of economic independence is good, including everything from two months to twenty years of non-employer-dependent financial security. But the future of freedom may well depend on those with *permanent* economic independence.

Three Types of Independents

There are three groups with long-term independence whose members are permanently free from dependence on a paycheck. The first two are made up of people supported by trust funds or equivalent, covered financially for life by wealth earned or passed down to them. Group one lives off these funds, often spending their lives in play and leisure. The second group spends their lives dedicated to making a difference in society through service, career, investment, entrepreneurship, or whatever path they choose to use to improve themselves and the world.



The third group has no trust fund or equivalent wealth to rely upon, but has the skill set and worldview of entrepreneurial enterprise. This group doesn't start with full bank accounts, but rather with emotional accounts full of faith and determination, grit and initiative, and an undying belief in the principles of abundance, hard work, and enterprise.

Whatever happens, members of this third group have an almost unshakable belief that there is opportunity everywhere. They believe in themselves, and they believe that if they put their minds and hands to work they can build value out of opportunity and create prosperity through their energy and effort.

Together, the second and third groups are society's [Producers](#). They start, build, invest in and grow businesses and organizations that create a nation's assets, advancements, and top achievements. They employ the workers of the world. And when hard times come, they don't ask government or employers to provide for them. Rather, they look around, assess the situation, see opportunities amidst the problems, and [get to work building value for the future](#).

They do, however, ask government and the big established businesses to get out of the way, to allow them the freedom to turn their initiative and work into growing profits and success. When government increases obstacles and regulations on small business, it directly attacks freedom and prosperity. When this occurs, [entrepreneurs naturally look for nations and markets that are friendly to business](#). As a result, nations with free enterprise systems attract more producers and are [blessed with greater wealth and prosperity](#).

Non-Producer Attempts to Create Producers

Nations naturally benefit from a large producer class, but how are producers created? The common answers fall short.

The liberal view is that those with credentials and advanced education—the [experts](#)—must set up a system that allows enterprise but also fairly distributes the rewards of economic success. The conservative view is to allow big investors to get huge rewards and therefore be willing to take [big risks](#). The blue-collar populist approach is to make sure

management treats labor fairly and humanely. The bureaucratic view is that rules make the society and economy work.

While each of these has a place, within limits, none of them really get to the heart of what makes producers tick. The problem is that these views are nearly always promoted and managed by employees with an employee background and an employee mentality. Non-producers grudgingly admit the great need for more producers, and then set out to build conveyor belts which will produce more producers. This only works insofar as a born entrepreneur sometimes breaks out of the conveyor belt and overcomes the obstacles to his or her success.

[David Brooks](#) has referred to Washington's party politics as the [PhD's \(liberals\) versus the MBA's \(conservatives\)](#). Both give lip service to small business; but their *modus operandi* belies a different governing worldview.



The PhD's want government to run the economy and provide jobs, and to be the Great State Entrepreneur so that regular citizens don't need to take risks. The MBA's want to appeal to big investment, and are loathe to consider small business significant or meaningful. The average citizen-employee wants managers to treat employees better. This is all employee thinking.

Government programs will not create many entrepreneurs, nor will most corporate ventures, bureaucratic agencies, or labor unions. And most MBA programs emphasize employee training and measure their effectiveness by citing job

placement statistics. Entrepreneurs are the natural competitors to all these.

The Answer

How do we create more producers? The answer, as frustrating as it is to the experts, is this: We don't.

That is, institutionalized and standardized programs do not of themselves yield producers, except by happenstance (as noted above). The very act of systemizing the training of initiative and innovation tends to shut down initiative and innovation.

What can be done, what actually works, is to [help young people realize the importance of producers in society](#) and reward their inclinations toward being anomalies, outliers, and disruptive innovators. The first one is easier said than done; the second one is nearly impossible for most parents and teachers to either conceive of or accomplish.

To support the development of the entrepreneurial spirit in the rising generation, youth need to be: 1) exposed to those who highly value entrepreneurialism, and 2) given opportunities to earn and receive personalized mentoring from successful producers. In short, as we elevate the honor and accessibility of being producers, we will tend to increase the number of them.



While the example may have its limitations, it is interesting to study the most successful network marketing, multi-level and other like organizations that in recent times have emphasized entrepreneurship among “regular” people. For instance, Amway and its affiliates created more millionaires than most of the top 100 corporations combined, with each millionaire being an independent entrepreneur. In such organizations, interested people are introduced to many who highly value entrepreneurial producers, and new affiliates work directly with a producer mentor.

Hundreds of non-traditional companies have accomplished similar results. Ironically, one criticism of such organizations by mainstream (employee) experts is that they are “pyramid schemes.” From another perspective, the true pyramid companies are those where most of the work hours are done by lesser-paid employees while the highest salaries and bonuses go to the executives at the top.

Hands-on business schools like [Acton MBA](#) have similarly helped educate entrepreneurs by a combination of inspiring people to be producers and also providing [producer mentors](#). And the many bestselling books promoting this same model, from the “[One Minute](#)” series to the writings of [Steve Farber](#) and many others, show that this system is appealing to many people.

Highly successful coaching services have followed this pattern as well, including such notable businesses as those established by [John Assaraf](#), [Leslie Householder](#), [Dennis Deaton](#) and many of those mentioned in [The Secret](#). Nearly the

entire self-help industry is built on this model: Promote the honor and value of successful entrepreneurialism and help would-be producers get direct mentoring from successful producers. Thinkers like [Andrew Carnegie](#) and writers like [Dale Carnegie](#) outlined this model a long time ago.

The mainstream PhD/MBA ambivalence toward the “Success” and “Self-Help” community stems from their reliance on and loyalty to the doctrine of employeeship. Harvard Business School once emphasized that the major changes in the world tend to come from what they called [“disruptive innovators.”](#) These anomalous individuals produce surprising novelties from out-of-the-mainstream sources and dramatically change society, business, and other facets of life. Disruptive innovators are disruptive precisely because they are totally unexpected by the conventional majority.

The government and big corporations spend a lot of resources trying to predict the future. And invariably entrepreneurial producers come along every few years and change everything. Reams of articles and books are written trying to predict where the next such innovations will come from and prescribing how to help train future innovators. But the [network marketing companies](#) and other non-traditional entities drastically out-produce government and big corporate attempts to build entrepreneurs.

The Real Point

But all of this commentary falls short of the real point. Only the *individual* can truly become an entrepreneur. If there is to

be a much-needed revolution that brings many more entrepreneurs to society, individuals, and families must take action and lead out. If what we want is more *independence*, then we must have more *independents*—more producers.

If you want society to be leavened by a greater proportion of individuals with producer mojo, then you need to consider whether you should be a producer yourself, and how to become one. To be a producer, it is up to you to make it happen.

Here are three suggestions:

1. Study successful producers.

The most important part of this is to see the power of focus, integrity, and faith in abundance that producers exemplify. Where the media often tries to paint producers as greedy and immoral, the truth is usually very different. Pay special attention to what great producers believe, and learn to think like them. The habit of truly believing in abundance and principles makes one a true independent, permanently free of dependence on others and able to build, create and lead.



2. Study what the great producers study.

[The material most studied by the greatest producers and leaders has been the great classics.](#) Producers are voracious readers, going far beyond any prescribed lists. Leaders are readers. Read the greatest works of mankind and everything else you can get your hands on. Keep reading, studying and learning throughout your life.

3. Find and work with mentors who are successful producers.

The unwritten lessons gained from this kind of experience are invaluable, real and profound. Coming [face-to-face with greatness](#) by working with successful producers is essential to becoming a successful producer yourself.

Our society desperately needs more producers. We need more people who think like entrepreneurs and more people who take initiative and fulfill the needs of society without waiting for government or the people of wealth and privilege to [“fix it for us.”](#) The future of freedom is directly and literally tied to the future of producers in our society.

About the Author



Oliver DeMille is the founder and former president of [George Wythe University](#), a founding partner of [The Center for Social Leadership](#), and the author of [A Thomas Jefferson Education](#). Presently, he serves as a mentor directing graduate and doctoral programs and devotes a majority of his time to writing. Oliver is a popular keynote speaker, writer and business consultant. He is married to the former Rachel Pinegar. They have eight children.

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