

Well, hello there and welcome to another episode of the, Your Next Best Step podcast. This podcast is all about helping you to build a resilient business, to give you some tips and some real strategies, not just theory and stuff that you might read in a book and just talk about, but actually surely things that really do work. Things that I have done myself and my business, but also things that I have worked with my one-on-one clients for the past decade and even prior to that for the past 20 years, working with entrepreneurs, giving them some strategies and watch them execute them so that they really do work and help your business to thrive in really any economy. And just in case you didn't know who I am, my name is Theresa Cantley and I am a business growth strategist, as well as a resilience specialist.

So today, I want to talk a little bit about vision. I mean, we always hear vision. We hear about, you need to have a vision in your business, you need to have a vision for the future, you need to have a vision statement. And I wanted to talk a little bit about it because I think it's something that people get confused about. I know a lot of business owners, when they start a business and maybe in school you learned, you have to have a mission. You have to have a mission statement, you have to have a vision statement. And a lot of people, when they write these vision statements, they write them based on the present. They write them based on whatever is happening now in their business and they look at what's happening now and plan on what they want to achieve.

And that's great, but that's not going to be what gets you to the next level and that's also not going to be what is going to help you to really achieve all the things that you want to achieve. And in working with a lot of small business owners, when we talk about vision, I think every single one that I've ever worked with when I've started working with them and I've even done it myself, we look at where we are right now. We look at where our current circumstances are in our business and we say, this is what I want to do and subconsciously we're like, this is what I want to do based on where I am now. So, as an example, I have a client and we were talking about the vision for his business, and he is working on expanding his business physically in his physical space because he owns the building and he had some tenants that moved out in different spaces in the building, and he wanted to expand his current business and add pieces onto it.

And it's a great time to do it because what's happening with COVID, he's a restaurant and he needs extra space, so it's a perfect time. So when we talked about, we were talking about with his management team, the vision for the business, and it was like, "Oh, we want to do fine dining in this new space." And we want to do this. And as we were talking about this, someone, and there's five people on the management team, but inevitably each one I should say, ended up coming back to, "Oh, we want to do this because this is what we're doing right now."

Or, "we can't do that because this is what's happening right now." We want to have fine dining because we're serving people right now and everybody likes the fancier specials or someone said, "Well, we wanted to have this type of bar because we can't do these things right now because of what's happening with COVID." And I sat there and I listened to them because as I said, I've heard this time and time again from all kinds of different small business owners, is when they're planning their vision, they limit it with the circumstances that are happening around them. So when you're thinking about your vision... Your vision, if we just think about what it is, it's something that really doesn't exist right now, right? It's a think big out of the box, something that we want to achieve.

And when we write our vision statement, a lot of people write it, not based on where they want to go in the future, but where they are right now and what they think they want to achieve based on where they are right now. And that's one of the things that ends up holding people back, because they write this vision statement, and they're saying we want to be the best restaurant in town. And it's like, "Okay, well, you're already a really good restaurant and people love coming to you. Can we stretch it a little bit further?" So, as you're writing your vision statement, or as you're thinking about your vision for your

business, and you hear it a lot right now, because we're getting to the end of 2020, and a lot of people are like, "We just want to be done with 2020, and we want to get into 2021, let's just start planning for it."

And you hear a lot about vision, and you hear a lot of people throwing it around like it's this thing, like it's just this random thing that doesn't really need a whole thought around it. And the truth is, is that really does need a whole lot of thought around it because your vision, as I said, is something that doesn't exist quite yet. It's something bigger than whatever it is that you are today and wherever you are as a business today. It's what you want to do in the future to create this big future. It's what you want to do to carve your own spot in this world and the difference that you want to make, the bigger impact that you want to make. And again, not based on what's happening right now and what's going on right now, but the future that you want to create.

So, as I listened to, if I go back to the client that I had the conversation with, as I listened to what they were talking about, I stopped them all. And I said, "Okay, everybody, let's rewind, hit the pause button. Let's rewind. And let's think about, yes, right now, your business is an extraordinary restaurant. Your business has been able to keep going and keep moving forward through COVID and through everything that's happened this year, and that's great, but that's where you are right now. So when we're planning out your vision, it's not based on where you are and who you are right now, but based on what you really want to be, that doesn't exist right now, how you want to impact your community and the greater mission that you have, that greater future you want to create, not just for you, but for your employees, for your community, for your customers."

And I read something kind of going along with this, I read something this morning that a lot of businesses, as they're also planning their vision, they're only thinking about themselves basically, and what it is that they want to achieve. And our vision, when we have a strong and compelling enough vision, it's not only about us. It has to do with that greater impact that we want to make for our customers. Again, as I stated two minutes ago, for our customers, for our community, for our employees. It's not just about our own success, but that greater good that we're trying to create. And I think this is why a lot of businesses kind of get stuck on that and only reach a level of success that... and then they plateau, is because that vision, that greater good, that bigger vision, that doesn't exist today, that's not even created that we want to work towards, we want to move towards, they don't have that solidified, or if they have at one point, they've gotten away from it.

I mean, at one point, this customer that I'm referencing, when I first met him and we talked about his vision and really dug deep into it, it wasn't about creating a restaurant. It was about creating a place for people to gather and to escape the stress of the world and that's exactly what he ended up building and over the past four or five years, but now it's like, "Okay." Because as your business grows, your vision's going to grow, so what does that next iteration of the vision look like? What does that next step of the vision look like? Because again, you want your vision to grow and change and transform as much as your business transforms, and as much as you transform. And the more you grow, the more your vision's going to grow, the more your business is going to grow.

And a lot of business owners don't want to take the time to really dig into this and think about what does that vision look like? Because that vision becomes your GPS. That vision becomes your guide, your direction and helps you to stay focused on doing the work that really matters and not doing the work that's just counting paperclips. So, a lot of business owners don't want to dig into what does that look like because number one, some people that I've worked with over the years when we start digging into the vision, they think it's a waste of time. They think it's all this fluff and stuff and crap, that doesn't really mean anything. And inevitably, I get asked the question, "Why are we even doing this? Why aren't we just digging right into the strategy? Just tell me what I need to do for my marketing."

And those are the people I don't want to work with, because if you don't have a vision and you don't want to create your vision, and all you care about is just making money and all you care about is doing the next latest and greatest marketing trend that's out there. Well, that's great. You know what, God speed. You go with yourself, you go with what you feel is right, but that's not going to get you the growth and the success that you really want. Not only from a monetary standpoint, but also from that fulfillment, that feeling of purpose that everybody really is striving for. And when people say to me, "Well, why do we have to dig into the vision? Our vision is we want to be the best restaurant in town."

Okay, that's great but that's what you are right now. You're one of the best restaurants in town, so that's not really a vision. That's just a statement. And we don't want just a statement. That vision should be connected to why you're doing your business in the first place. That vision should be connected to, again, that bigger purpose that you and your business have. And people don't want to dig into that because it really means letting go of probably a lot of the things that you thought you knew about your business and learning all kinds of new things and really stepping into a new way of looking at things. And then what that means is you need to put in the work and it's hard work. It's hard work to sit there and define something that doesn't even exist right now, right?

So for me, my vision is to impact a million businesses so that we can learn how to create and interact with each other, so we can build a better world, because if we start with our businesses, it spreads out to the world and it'll change the world. That's a vision and a future that doesn't necessarily exist but that's my vision for what I'm doing in my business. Do I teach people marketing strategy? Absolutely. Do I teach people SEO? Absolutely. Do I teach people business strategy and looking at your numbers and understanding them? Absolutely. But those are just the things that I do along the way to get to that bigger vision that I haven't created yet, but I'm working towards it. And that takes a lot of digging deep and really figuring out who you're made of, what you're made of and who you are.

What is it that you stand for? What is it that you care about? And again, that greater impact that you want to make in your community. Businesses that are solely there just to make money and that's what they care about and they're constantly putting out promos and they're constantly putting out coupons and all you ever hear from them is about sale, sale, sale, sale, pitch, pitch, pitch, pitch, those are the businesses that, they're commodities. And I don't know about you, but I would rather be somebody different, somebody who cares, somebody who's connecting with my customers than just a commodity, than just another business, right? And when we look around and we see what all those other businesses are doing, and we think, "Oh, well, I need to do that too, because they look super successful. They say they're super successful. So I'm just going to do what they want to do. So my vision is to make a lot of money." Or, "My vision is to just be the biggest restaurant."

And you know what, that's great and if that works for you, go with it. But if you really want to achieve a level of success beyond what you ever thought possible, defining your vision, and really defining along with that, your vision for your business and your vision for your life and your vision for that impact that you want to create, along the way you're going to define what success really means to you and you're going to find it's not all about the money. I mean, the more money we make, the more people we can help, but it's not just about the money. It's about the impact. It's about that greater impact and that greater purpose that we have to make that bigger difference.

And where that starts, again, is discovering your vision and really getting clear on it. And it's not based, when we are creating our vision and when we are looking at this, it's not based on what is happening in our current circumstances. It's not based on what's happening right now. It's based on what's happening, a future that's not even created yet. It's based on possibility and thinking about the possibilities and thinking about those amazing things that we want to do, but we haven't done yet. That's where our vision comes from. So, some things that you can do, if you haven't sat down and really

thought about your vision, and this is something that I would highly recommend that you start working on now, now that we're into the fourth quarter and really figuring out what is that bigger vision that you have?

What does it look like for your business? Because as things change and things are changing every day, that vision that we have is that thing that's going to be our GPS, that thing that's going to help us to thrive no matter what changes come out, no matter what things happen. So, if you haven't done so already think about what it is that you do amazing as a business. What do you do that's amazing? And what would that successful business look like? Not just monetarily, but what greater impact would you be making? Who would you be working with? What would you be doing? What kinds of amazing things would you be achieving? And then look at yourself and say, "Okay, what different decisions do I need to make and who do I need to be, starting as the business owner, who do I need to start showing up as?"

But the first piece, really saying, what is it that we do really, really well? What do we want to be known for? What is that bigger impact that we want to make beyond any product or service or offer that we have? Are you just a restaurant or are you a bigger experience? Are you a store or are you a destination for people? What does that look like? And once you have those things defined, then you can start to figure out what your vision is. And your vision is something that doesn't just get created on paper and stays in your brain and then that's it. It gets communicated to absolutely everybody on your team so that everybody knows what the plan is, what you're trying to accomplish, what you're trying to do and what it's going to look like, or what you want it to look like.

So that way, all of the decisions that get made, if they align with the vision they get done, if they don't align with the vision, then it's something we need to let go of or rethink. Goals, same thing. Everyday tasks, same thing. People you hire, everything goes back and aligns to that bigger vision that you have of the future that you want to create. So, if you haven't done so already, I highly recommend that you sit down and really think about what does that vision look like for your business? We talked last week about how a lot of business owners are going through anxiety, going through a lot of stress and a lot of potentially depression and how the changes that have happened in the world have impacted a lot of business owners. And again, anxiety is on the rise, depression is on the rise.

And I can say one thing that has helped me with my own anxiety, my own situation, is really getting clear on my vision and going back to that vision and looking at it when I start to feel that sense of anxiousness and that sense of stress and that sense of, "Oh my gosh, what's happening?" And when those external influences come in, going back to my vision and looking at, I have a big piece of paper on my wall that clearly lays it out, and going back and looking at it, it helps me to connect back to myself and say, "I got this. It's time for me to bet on myself and win." So for you, it's time for you to bet on yourself and win and create a vision that is bigger than you, that doesn't necessarily exist already, but it's something that you want to work towards so that you can leave your legacy on this world. Thank you for joining me and until next week, have a great rest of your week. Take care.