

I just want to start off this podcast by saying ... just putting out there to everybody, if you hear a snoring noise in the back, it's just my puppy. She snores. Yes. So she's sitting next to me and I finally got her to calm down. We had to take her one puppy to an orthopedic vet at this hospital and whenever we have to separate the two, because they are litter mates, it is crazy. So I finally got her to calm down and now she's snoring. So if you hear anything, it's not me. It's her. So anyway, welcome to another episode of the Your Next Best Step podcast. I am your host Theresa Cantley and thank you so much for joining me again for another episode. I know we took a little bit of a break last week, but we're back again. We've had some crazy tech issues and things going on.

I don't know. Mercury's in retrograde and it better get out soon because it's been just crazy. But anyway, we're back. Normally we're releasing episodes every week and my podcast editor and my assistant, they were both like, "Theresa," but I'm here, I'm here because I know you guys love to hear from me every week, with all the tips and strategies and stories of experiences to help you to grow your business. And today I'm going to talk about this concept of build it and they will come. I know we talk about field of dreams and Kevin Costner movie, and that line just was made famous in that movie. But I want to talk about it from the standpoint of not about cornfields, but to talk about it from the standpoint of business, because I think it's something that a lot of small business owners face or think or go through at some point in time, probably when they first started.

I know for myself, my business owner and I ... my business owner. My business partner and I, when we first started our brick and mortar store, went through the whole thing of, and getting stuck in build it and they will come. So when we first launched our store, we were working full time and we opened up a brick and mortar business on the side because we started off being an online business and we decided, okay, we got sick of doing the road show because we had our online e-commerce platform and then we would do show after show after show on the weekends and it was just getting really old, really fast. So we decided to open up a brick and mortar store. We went through this a couple of times.

I remember opening up the store and being like, "This is going to be the most amazing store ever and people are just going to flock from all over the place and it's going to be awesome, and we're going to have this and we're going to have that, and we're going to do this and we're going to do that, and we're going to have coffee and tea, and we're going to have baked goods and we're going to have girls [inaudible 00:03:13] and all this stuff." And we built it and nobody showed. Nobody showed up. And it was kind of like this huge letdown, huge letdown because I'm thinking, wait, this is ... I don't understand. We thought it was so awesome. We thought this concept was so awesome and we thought the store was going to be awesome because we put everything in there that we love and it was going to be so great because we built it and people were going to be flocking through the door.

And the truth is that very rarely does that ever happen, especially when you have a business that's a new concept, that's not a box store or a store that a franchise that other people have heard of, but when you're taking something and you're starting it from scratch, it's very rare that people just start flocking to your business. Especially if you don't have a really big budget to do a lot of advertising prior to the store opening or the business opening. It just is very rare that you will have an opening and you're just going to have people flocking to your business. It's possible. Anything's possible. So first of all, and like I said, a lot of small business owners get caught in this trap. This is one trap. And I've heard it time and time again.

"Yeah, but I built this business," or "I launched this program," or "We launched our website and nobody bought from it or nobody came." I know a lot of business owners that I work with, when we talk about, especially e-commerce sites and SEO and it's like, "But I launched it and I did it and nobody bought from me," and it's like, "Okay, well, there's a reason why." And we're going to talk about that today. Actually, a couple of reasons. So the first thing is, is that we want to think of, when we're developing our vision, a

vision isn't based on what's going on today. It's based on what we want to build for the future and it's probably more than likely something that people haven't seen before. Whether it's something different in your industry or it's a different type of business or whatever, it is more than likely something that people haven't seen before.

So when we go and launch it, so in my example, with my brick and mortar store, armario, which is closet in Spanish, but we wanted it to look like a women's closet and that they were coming to shop at the store as if they were shopping in their best friend's closet because most women, one of the things that they love to do is they want to go to a fancy event or they're going out for dinner or they're whatever, and they can't find anything to wear. So what do they do? They want to borrow something from their best friend. So they go over and they have some wine, some coffee, some tea, whatever, some water, whatever they like to drink and they sit and they chat and they have fun and they shop each other's closets. So we thought, "Oh yeah. This is a new concept. This is great. People are going to love it."

But one of the main things that we didn't necessarily do is, yeah, we have this vision, but we put it out there, but we also didn't really talk to our customers. We thought it was a great idea and we thought that, oh yeah, this is what women love and this is what they would love to do. But it wasn't like we did any market research. It wasn't like we engaged our current customer base because every time we did shows, we kind of tried to make it look like a closet and have the same kind of concept, but when you have a brick and mortar store, it's a little different. And there's so many things that go into getting it off the ground. So one of the things is to really figure out what it is that your customers want.

And I see this happen a lot where people will build things and create things because they like it. Not because they think that their customer will like it or they've talked to their customer and they're like, "You know what? This is something that our customers want more of." And then they develop something based on that. I've seen it time and time again where they create something based on what they think, just based on what they think that people are going to want. Not from talking to anybody, not from examining any metrics, not from looking at things, not from anything, but because they like something. So they're going to create it. Sometimes that works, don't get me wrong. But more often than not, we want to look at solving a problem for people.

We want to look at building stuff that people want right now and building more of it and creating more of it. So the first thing is, is that you always want to make sure that you're engaging with your customers, your current customers or doing some research around what are people most frustrated about? What do people love as it relates to your industry and really dig into that and then also match it with your strengths. That's the first piece. So then once you're able to do that, and here's the big piece, what does it really take to get people to your business? So when you understand what it is that your customer really wants, and you're building this thing to solve a problem, you're building your store or your restaurant or whatever to create something that the world has never seen before and it's something that people have wanted or it's something to solve a problem in your industry.

Once we do that then we can develop messaging and marketing so that we can attract people into your business and people say, "What does it really take to get people in through your doors?" It takes a lot of hard work and it takes knowing who your customer is, knowing what they're looking for and then creating messaging to connect to them. Creating marketing that is going to peak their interest and then draw them in. There's no magic. There's no silver bullet. There's no special formula. It just takes having a conversation and doing some research and then connecting the pieces together so you can market it, so that you can get the word out there and connect with the people that you want to bring into your business.

I had a client several years ago and when I first started working with him, he had just opened up his business and he said to me ... we met the first time and I was telling him, "Well, these are the steps that

you need to take and this is the order that you need to take them in and this is what you need to do." And I remember him turning to me and saying, "Well, when am I going to make a million dollars?" I was like, "You just opened your business three weeks ago." But he said, "Well, I opened it. I had my sign out front so I should be getting clients in like now, right?" And I just remember sitting there and I said, "No, people might be walking down the street, and they might..." in this area they would be driving down the street, "And they'll see your sign but that doesn't mean they're going to come in."

Especially he was a service-based business, a different type of service-based business. So yeah, people aren't going to just come in because they see a sign outside. They want to know more about you. You might attract them. They might peak their interest, but then they're going to want to learn more about you. So really understanding who you're serving and what you're creating to solve a problem for the people that you're serving, as well as maybe some insights that you have that you know people really need help with and you can help them. So then you can say to yourself, "Okay, how do I keep them coming back time and time and time again?" And this is another thing. I've seen a lot of business owners out there, a lot, and many times over, unfortunately, these businesses don't last very long.

They look at people like dollar signs, and people are not dollar signs. If money is your core, that is your only thing that you think about, that is the only reason you started your business was to solely make money, just to make money, there's no other why behind it, I'm sorry to say, but your business might not last. And I've seen it happen, like I said, the guy that was like, "When am I going to be a millionaire? I want to be a millionaire now. I have debt to pay off." Well, okay. I get it. Yeah, everybody's goal is to make money. That's why we start businesses, right? But that can't be your sole focus. And unfortunately his business didn't make it. So we want to make sure that we have our why in place. We want to make sure that we understand the problem that we're solving for people.

And we also understand what it is that we do, that greater purpose that we do in our business, and that people aren't dollar signs. People are relationships. People are connection. People are important. And a lot of businesses, when they look at customer retention or they look at getting customers in the door, they only look at a one-time only transaction. They don't look at what is the potential lifetime value of a customer relationship and what that means is they're not just coming in one time and that's all you're focused on is just getting people in the door, and a lot of business owners do that. All they do is just focus on getting more and more and more people in the door, getting new people, and they don't take care of the people that have been shopping there or dining there or coming to them for years and years and years.

So all they're doing is they're just focusing on the dollar sign and getting more people in the door and they're not taking care of and building that lifetime relationship with customers. What do you think is more valuable? A one-time only thing or a lifetime of sales? Lifetime of sales, right? So taking a look at that and understanding what that value is of the lifetime relationship you can build with one of your customers and there's three different phases or journeys that your customer will go through in that lifetime value or that lifetime of the relationship that you have with them. So the first one is the captivation. You get them through the door. The second one is education. So you start educating them about other services and things that you offer, who you are, what makes you different, that whole thing.

Then you start to elevate. So you offer them VIP things. You connect with them constantly. "How are you doing?" You are constantly building that relationship and nurturing that connection that you have with them and that's one thing that a lot of people miss. And it takes time. It's not like that's why you build it and they will come, is so false. It takes time to build these things. It takes time and work and effort to get A, relationship with your customer but also to get the word out about who you are, what you do, what makes you different and how you can help. So we just have to keep at it and we have to

understand how are you going to connect with these people? Are you going to connect with them via Facebook or Instagram or get people to sign up for an email list?

Are you going to do print ads? Are you going to advertise on the local television station or whatever that looks like, but understanding how are you going to find these people that you want to come back to your store time and time again? And the third thing is, what do you do when people don't show? And I know for myself, when we first had our business, I was like, "That's it, we're going to close." But the thing is, you got to just keep going. You got to just pick yourself back up, figure out what worked, what didn't work. If nothing worked, okay, what can we do differently and what lessons can we learn from this? One of the biggest things that we learned is we needed to do some research. We needed to do some research on what really was our target customer? And then how are we going to go find them so we can bring them into the store.

Once we started to do that and we started to really pay attention, we were able to get people to come in. It took a little while, but we were able to build up our customer base and get people to come in. Anytime they needed a gift, guess what? They came back to our armario. And that's what you want to do. But you can't do that if you don't know who your customer is, you're building something just because you like it, not because it's something that your customers would like or would solve a problem for them. And you just got to just keep going, just keep going, keep moving forward and eventually the people will come. They'll come flooding in, but you got to start somewhere. So again, understanding who your customer is, understanding how to communicate with them, focusing on the lifetime value and not just the transactional value of a one-time transaction, but the lifetime and then really building that relationship and just rinse and repeat, rinse and repeat, rinse and repeat, and understanding really the deeper purpose of what your business is about and how that connects directly to the people that you want to attract to your business and have them come in time and time again.

Until next time, until next week, have a great rest of your week. And remember if you build it, you got to keep going, you got to keep creating things, you got to keep sharing it, keep posting it and just rinse and repeat until you get people banging down your doors, until you continue to build that customer relationship. All right. Take care. And I will see you soon.