

Theresa Cantley: Well, hello there. My name is Theresa Cantley, and I am a professional badass. You might be wondering what that is, but let me tell you.

Ten years ago, I finally owned that title and took my seat at the table. Because 10 years ago, I was sitting at my desk, stressed out beyond belief, thinking to myself, I have all of these projects to do. I have all of these things I need to accomplish. I am on revision number 20, where my boss kept making me revise and revise and revise. And then finally went back to the first version of something that I created. And I'm sitting there thinking to myself, is this what my life is going to be about? Is my life going to be about being told that my ideas are stupid or being told that I need to revise something 20 times just because someone thought that pushing me that way was actually going to make me be better? Was my life going to be about people saying, "Wow, she was a really hard worker." And I sat at my desk and I cried and I felt so stressed and so overwhelmed.

Here I am, a 34 year old woman, who had been through a horrible divorce at age 23, who worked her way up through corporate America, who had bad boss after bad boss after bad boss and just wanting to be something better to make something great out of her life. And every time she got kicked down, every time she got told that she would never make something of herself, she proved them wrong. She proved them wrong time and time again. And why did she do that? Because she was resilient.

And that's why 10 years ago, when I was sitting at my desk, stressed out, thinking that my life was only ever going to be about working hard or working for people who told me my ideas were stupid or getting my boss diet Coke, because we only had diet Pepsi at a sales meeting and he wanted a diet Coke. That was my primary goal at a sales meeting that I was organizing 10 minutes before I was set to give a marketing presentation. That's what my life was going to be about. And I sat there and I was stressed out. And I said to my friend, my best friend in the world, "Is this really what I'm supposed to be doing?" And a week after I said that. I sat at that same desk and received a phone call from the doctor telling me that I needed to go to the emergency room immediately, or the artery in my neck and the clot in my brain was going to rupture.

So I talked them out of me going in an ambulance. And instead my best friend took me. And that experience, I remember looking at her in the ER. We're going through all these battery of tests and people are running around frantically. I looked at her and said, "There is more to my life. And today is the day that I am going to own that. And we are going to get out of this corporate environment." Even though it was a small business. It was a bigger small business, but it was a corporate event. "And we are going to become entrepreneurs. We are going to you take this dream that we have, that we've started of building a retail business and we are going to move it forward." And that was the day that I became the professional badass. And I want you to become a professional badass as well. And what it takes to be a professional badass and own that seat

at the table is building resilience and being resilient, having that ability to bounce back.

And one of the big things that I teach and I talk a lot about is business resilience. And my husband said to me, "Well, what exactly is business resilience?" Because my husband still works in corporate America. And he said, "What exactly is it? I think you need to talk to people about what it is because people think it's a variety of things." But what I will say that key word of resilience is what is going to keep you bouncing back time and time again. And the definition itself is exactly what that says that you have the ability. Resilience is you have the ability to bounce back time and time again. Okay, I'm going to paraphrase it. I'm not exactly speaking right from Webster's dictionary, but that's my paraphrasing of it.

So in big business, when you look at traditional business, they look at it one way. They look at it like business continuity plans. Making sure that if you're a business owner, that you have some kind of path behind you, whether it's partners that you want to buy into the business, or you have family members that want to buy into it or whatever. I mean, in corporate America, they have continuity. So if something happens to the CEO or the president, then there's a whole path or whole chain after that of people who would take over. But there's more that goes into a business continuity plan. But you hear business continuity. You hear disaster recovery plans. We used to talk about that a lot when I was working in the laboratory equipment industry as well as the insurance industry.

So that's kind of how traditional business looks at it. If you look up business resilience in Google, that's exactly what you're going to find. You're going to find a lot of people talking about business continuity and disaster recovery and that kind of stuff. I mean, you will have people who talk about resilience and they only talk about three things, resilience in people, processes and products. Some people will talk about processes and systems or systems and infrastructure. But basically it's that if we have a disaster, how are we going to recover from it? The ones that I've seen, the plans are very, they're very methodical. They're very structured. They're very "This is what we're going to do. If the systems, if our network crashes, this is what we're going to do. Or if the servers crashed, this is what we're going to do. Or if we have a flood, this is what's going to happen."

So people look at it from if we have a disaster. That's how most businesses look at it. This is what's going to happen if we have a disaster or someone dies, someone who runs the business dies, this is what's going to happen. Most people, when I talk about what does business resilience mean, most people think, oh, especially with what's happened in the past 14 months, people look at it and say, "Oh, okay, well to be a resilient business, to me that means that if something happens, you just need to work harder to get through it. You just need to put your head down. You need to go into crisis mode and you just need to just work harder. You need to make sure that your staff is working longer

hours. Your management team is working longer hours. All hands on deck. And this is what we need to do. We need to cut costs. We need to potentially cut people. We need to cut our marketing budget and we just need to put our noses down, our heads down. And we just need to plow through this and we will get through it."

Both of those are not my definition. And my definition of what I believe and what I teach as building a resilient business goes a lot further than that. And my definition and how I look at it comes from me learning and owning that title of being a business badass. So to me, I look at business resilience as building a strong foundation and building that from the inside of your business to the outside, building it outward, so that no matter what happens, you have the ability to remain stable, to quickly shift gears and course correct when you need to, and then continue building that momentum so that you can continue moving forward. That's how I look at resilience. And that's how I define it.

In that you have the ability to bounce back. When you have that resilience built into your business, where you have a strong foundation that is built on a specific type, a strong type of connection with employees and management and the owner. If you don't have management, you just have employees and you, you have that connection so that everybody understands what the values are in the business. They understand that those values that the business is built on directly impacts the vision of the business. And everybody is clear on that.

So if your values are education, diversity, inclusivity, fun, or balance, you know everybody understands that the business is built on that. And no matter what happens, the business is going to make decisions that align with whatever those values are. And the business is also going to make decisions that are aligned on whatever the mission and the vision are. No matter what happens, no matter what impacts the business, pandemic or whatever, when you have those things set in place and everybody understands what all of that means and also their role in all of that, that is how you are able to course correct and shift gears. And I know everybody used pivot last year, but shift, I like to say shift gears or course correct. Depending on whatever impact came in or whatever situation was happening, you're able to do that very quickly, but also very sustainably.

A lot of people waited around last year, but also a lot of people pivoted and completely forgot about their vision, completely forgot about what they were doing. They pivoted and went in a completely opposite direction because that's what everybody else was doing and that's what everybody was telling them they should do. And what happened? It flopped because they didn't go back and say, "Let's look at our vision again. Let's look at what is that bigger difference that we're trying to make in this world?" And when you can understand that and you can understand what is it that we do right here right now, so mission and vision. What are we about? What is that person that we want to be? Our core values. When everybody is clear on that, they can look at that and say, "Okay, whatever is happening, how can we continue to help our customers, sell to our

customers, work with our customers, engage, connect with our customers? How can we continue to do that with what's happening in this world? Because we're super clear on who we are, what we're about, what we stand for and what we're trying to do?"

And that is the core, core principle of business resilience. Again, that is what helps us to build that strong foundation, not a foundation on numbers, but a foundation on people. And that is the core difference when you look at how other businesses look at it, but then also how I look at it. And again, the reason why I've built this framework to build stronger businesses, businesses that can then focus on scaling, the reason I built it and how I built it is based on my years, my many years of going through and working in different industries, where there were so many gaps and so many problems and things that came along, and hearing, "We need to go into crisis mode. We need to go into reaction mode. We need to cut costs. We need to do this. We need to do that." And did it make them a stronger business when they got out of it? No. Did it help them to grow? No, they went backwards.

So learning all of that and actually applying it in 2008, when we started to have the recession and taking a business and saying, okay, let's look at how can we, there's all these things that are going on with the market, with the economy, with the government, whatever, in 2008. Let's look at what's happening in the world and let's look at what we do best. And then what can we do to grow this particular area of our business because that's what we do best, and that's what the world needs, and it aligns with what we care about the most? And at that time it was laboratory refrigeration for vaccines.

And what did we do back then? Because we focused on it and looked at it that way and had started to build that foundation, we were able to launch a private label refrigeration line in a recession that actually grew to almost \$2 million in a year. So people who think, "We need to cut costs, we need to just keep our heads down and work harder, we need to grind and grind and grind and drive our people, having them work 10 hour days, that is how we're going to be able to grow." And it's just not the case.

When I look at it and when I talk about this foundation of building this strong foundation, I talked about some of the things that you need to look at. But I like to look at it in pillars. Okay. I might come up with another word for that because I know pillars just sounds so normal. But the seven pillars of that resilience that you want to look at or the seven pillars that are going to make you or help you to build that strong foundation, that's not built on numbers, but built on people is number one, your people. Okay. Again, getting them to understand the vision and the mission and the core values of your business and how that relates to them and what their purpose is in that bigger this is what we're trying to do with this world. We're trying to make this world a better place and here's how we're going to do it. And here's what you're doing to help us to do that.

So building that within your people. That comes into also building a better culture, right? I have seen so many cultures and I just had this conversation with somebody last week. There are so, so many cultures out there in businesses that are terrible. They're built on finger pointing and blaming each other for things. And there has to be blame. Somebody always has to be blamed for something instead of looking at it and saying, "Okay, well maybe we just have a broken process. Let's just fix the broken process." Because ultimately not one person is to blame, but everybody's to blame. But just looking at it and saying, wow, there are so many people out there that don't realize, they want to fix their business and they want to grow, but they don't realize that they're actually the ones that are the problem and how they lead and how they show up every day to their people and the lack of communication that they have with their people. It's incredible.

So if we can do those things to build a strong foundation with our people inside, and we start there, we can again be able to have that strong foundation that will withstand anything. Going along with our people, we have you. We need to make sure that you have a strong foundation and you understand how your showing up as a leader in your business as the business owner and what your role is. If you think that you need to be the technician and you need to be doing things at all times, always in your business, on and on and on, forget it.

And I said this, I say this a lot to the people that I work with, you can not work on your business with the same mindset, the same things that you did, the same task, the same tactics, the same tools, the same, whatever as you did when you first started your business and you were working in your business. I think I just did a podcast, I know I just did a podcast, a couple of podcasts ago, all about the difference between working in and working on. So you need to have a strong foundation of you as a leader and an owner and someone who is building something to do something bigger in this world, or do something better in this world. You have to have that strong foundation within yourself. So you can push it out to your people and the other things that will give you a strong foundation.

So third thing is products, making sure that you have products and a supply chain that is, I like to call it, agile. I know there is something called agile processes out there. I just talked to my husband the other day about this, but making sure that the products that you sell, that they aren't necessarily... Number one, you don't go overboard and think we need to put more into the business. And then you have this, I like to say, you go wider on product range, not deeper. Okay. But also you have the ability to get them to your customer multiple ways live and in person, virtual, whatever that looks like. Okay.

And along with that, processes, how are you going to develop processes to make sure... Whenever I talk about processes, people always groan and roll their eyes. But processes to make sure that you can get product in and as well as from your vendors, from your suppliers. I know a lot of people ran into supply chain issues with COVID and with everything that happened. I mean, it disrupted

the whole world. And part of that was a lot of businesses, a lot of bigger businesses run lean. They run on that whole principle of being lean. And when COVID happened, well, they had issues. They didn't have people. They didn't have production set up correctly because they were running it based on what the world look like prior to 14 months ago.

So having processes in place, and I do a whole big thing on processes, and there's five different types of processes that you want to set up in your business as a whole other discussion, but making sure that you have the ability to continue running your business, interacting with people, it's not just about selling, but connecting with people, engaging with them and getting the things that you need to them no matter what comes your way.

The brand is another big one. Again, being clear on who you are, what you stand for, who you are right now and what you're doing, and then what's that vision that you have for where you want to go and what you want to do and the impact that you want to make in this world. A lot of people when COVID happened, because they didn't have a lot of these things in place, when it came down to having lack of product or having disruptions their business, or they didn't know how to communicate with their customers, they didn't know who they were, what they stood for, and how they were going to engage and just couldn't get that message out there. And what happened? They had a lot of problems, a lot of really pissed off people, people who didn't know what was going on. I know a lot of people who deal with overseas businesses struggled to communicate with their customers to communicate or get correct information from their vendors. And then what ended up happening, it damaged their reputation.

So when you are clear on who you are, what you stand form how you show up in your industry, that's how you can protect your brand. Your brand isn't just about your logo, your colors, your font, styles, whatever. It's about who you are and how people view you when you're not even there. So the clearer you are on what your brand is, you are able to make decisions very quickly and course correct when you need to.

We also have infrastructure. And this is something that I see a lot of people cheap out on. A lot of people when it comes to infrastructure, networks, cabling, phones, computers, iPads, any kind of digital device, and I see this a lot with small business owners, they want to get the cheapest. They want to get repurposed. They use computers that are so old. I have a client who, when I first started working with them, they had one of the oldest computers I've ever seen and thought, "Oh no, we don't need to get a new one." So making sure that you have... I mean, think about it. This is 2021. With everything that just happened, we want to make sure that we have the ability to keep our business running no matter what. So if devices go down, computers go down, if our network goes down, if we don't have good service, how are we going to keep going? Right.

The computers crash. If there's a Wi-Fi outage or whatever it is, you don't have strong enough Wi-Fi and you can't conduct business, then we have a problem. Same thing with your phone. I mean, I conduct a lot of my business on my phone. I want to make sure that I have an up to date phone and a phone that can handle doing all these different things. So making sure that you have that solid infrastructure in place.

The last one is systems. And systems and processes, and I talk about this too. We could go into this forever, but systems and processes must align, but also systems that can help you grow and grow with you and are easy to understand. And your staff, your employees, you can understand how to use them. One of the worst things that you can do, and I've seen this, is buy a piece of software that is way beyond your capability and has a long learning curve, a very steep learning curve I should say with no support from the software company, no support to help you to understand it. And then what are you doing? You're spending tons of money. You have this piece of software that's supposed to help you in your business. And instead it's hindering you.

So making sure that you have systems that can grow with you and that your staff has proper education on how to use them, as well as whatever processes you develop, you want to make sure that the two of them are in alignment. Because if they're not, you are going to have a hiccup and a breakdown in just flow business workflows. You also want to make sure, and I've seen this a lot as well, is redundancy. I had a client one time, they had three pieces of software that did the same thing, but they used it. They used each different piece of software. They used a third of it, even though the three pieces of software did the same thing instead of figuring out which one worked for their needs the best and getting some education so they could let the other two go.

I know it sounds crazy, right? But you want to make sure that your systems... Again, you don't want to have... In some cases, redundancy is good, but in many cases, if it's something where you have systems that do the same thing and almost like it gets into, are you keeping two sets of books or what does that look like, do you have two types of processors, credit card processors, it's not good. It's not right. It's a waste of time and a waste of resources. So making sure that you have systems, number one that can grow as your business grows, that your people have the proper education and you have the right partnership with the software company. Nothing is worse than when you have a software company that they do one week of training with you, expect you to learn this huge amount of information. And then what do they do? They push you to tech support who knows nothing about your business or nothing about the nuances in your business. Nothing is worse than that. And I've seen it a lot. So making sure that you have the right partnership with whatever software you're using.

So here's the thing. You might be thinking, "Wow, this is a lot to implement. Why do we need to implement all that? I have this business and I want to grow it. I've been in business for several years and all I want to do is just grow it. So

why are processes and all of these things, why do we have to think about all these things in my business? My business has a strong foundation. I just want to grow." Well, here's why. A hundred thousand businesses closed last year. There was a total of 675,000 restaurants in the United States with more employees than the airline industry and the auto industry. Crazy, right? Those 675,000, okay, we just had the grant relief. Most of those businesses, those restaurants, their income, their revenue was down. Most of them, 60%. They tried to get employees to come back, employees that they had to furlough for a period of time and struggled to get them to come back.

When this new restaurant relief act came out, 275,000 of the 675,000, 275,000 businesses applied for that grant to get relief, to get money, to help them because they lost so much money. People were dipping into their personal savings. So think about that. Those are huge numbers where they ended up having to close down the grant. They had to change. They didn't close it down completely, but they closed it down to the majority, to a lot of people that were trying to apply for that restaurant grant. But just a hundred thousand small businesses closed their doors. That's a hundred thousand dreams that went kaput.

Plus, a lot of businesses ended up taking a huge hit, having to let go of or furlough employees and then trying to get them to come back. And again, really just having to shift how they were doing things from before. I mean, a lot of businesses who did brick and mortar businesses that had live interactions with customers had to all of a sudden become e-commerce and had no clue what they were doing and still have no clue, have these crazy systems, are paying ridiculous amounts for software and paying ridiculous amounts for people who are out there saying, "Oh, I'll get you to the top of the list for SEO if you paid me \$500 or I'll show you how to set up your Google Ad Words for \$3,000 a month." And because they don't know how to do any of this stuff, they're going for it. And they're spending more money and going more in the hole. More small business owners than ever dipped into personal savings, went through personal retirement funds just to keep their doors open.

But there are also business owners who actually were able to either break even and not have that loss or were able to grow during, and some of them even had their best year ever during COVID. Now, why is that? Well, a lot of them, based on my knowledge of people that I work with had these things in place. They had that strong foundation with their people, with their processes, with their products, so that when things happened, they were able to shift from live interaction to virtual in less than 24 hours. They were able to get communication out to their team and say, "Okay, this is what we're going to do." And be able to say, "We need your help. And here's what each person's role is going to be."

They were able to... They already had e-commerce platforms up, but because they took the time again to understand their processes and understand a lot of

the systems that they needed to use such as Google Ad Words, such as Facebook Ads, such as different commerce platforms, whether it's Shopify or WooCommerce or whatever, they had that ready to go. They spent the time to understand it and implemented, were able to implement a revised strategy in a very short period of time.

But here's the other thing. With small businesses, even when business owners, prior to COVID small business owners, they opened their business. And 18 months later, 30% of them close their doors. And of those 30% within five years, 40% of those closed their doors. Why? Because people open up a business, they go gangbusters, they work and work and work and burn out and say, "I did not open up a business to sacrifice my life" and they close. And the ones that make it past that 18 months, they just grind and grind and grind and grind, and never are able to work on their business because they're constantly working in their business and doing all the work and being the technician instead of building that strong foundation so that eventually they can pull themselves out and they can be the big picture, drive the bus and hire really good people to run the business inside.

The other thing is, as far as why the world needs it, we need good businesses. As I said, there are a lot of business owners out there who don't really understand what it means to build a good culture. They solely look at customers as transactions and not people. They look at their staff as just a means to bring more money in. And COVID ended up leveling the playing field. So if you were struggling pre COVID, what COVID did is it leveled the playing field for everybody. So between the grants and the loans and all that stuff that came out. And it also opened the world's eyes to how much small business is the backbone of our country and our economy. And without small business, how much it would suffer, our economy would suffer even more and how much the country would suffer. And really with a lot of economies all over the world, small business is the backbone of it.

So when COVID happened, it leveled the playing field and said, okay, it raised everybody's awareness to how important small business was. So it gave the people, the underdogs, the people who thought "I can't compete with big business," it gave those people a chance to use their voice, to build a better business, to build a stronger foundation. And it doesn't have to be... A lot of people think that I was like this too. You have to go big. You got to go big all at once. And it doesn't have to be like that. You just have to, it's like going back to basics and building this strong foundation on those seven pillars so that you could have a better business, that you could really make a difference in your community and with your customers and just really focus on getting yourself out there.

And so many small businesses that really didn't have much of a voice and really didn't have much of a name before all of this happened, they just really were able to build a bigger presence. Why? Because they took the time to understand

these things. They took the time to understand well, to really say, I don't want to be a statistic. I don't want to be one of those businesses that's going to close their doors. I'm going to take the time to understand this stuff, to build the right plan, to build the right strategy, to understand what it is that I'm trying to create here all along and really who my customer is and what do they need. And from there, I'm going to use that. I'm going to take that. I'm going to implement it and I'm going to work hard, but I'm going to work hard on the right things so that I can continue to move my business forward.

So a lot of people come to me and they say, "I'm going to grow my business. I want to grow my business. I want to scale my business. I want to do this. I want to make more money." It's always about, I want to make more money, and I get it. We all want to make more money because the more money we make, the more people we can help. But before you can grow, and this is the biggest thing that I asked someone is what does the foundation of your business look like? How resilient is your business? And most people that come to me and want to grow can't answer that question. They say, "Oh, well, our revenue is this. And we grew our revenue this much." And it's like, okay, well, I don't care about the revenue. What does the foundation of your business look like? What is the foundation? How resilient is your business? How profitable is your business? And most people can't answer that question. And if they can't answer that question, they don't have really good answers.

So before you can grow your business, you want to make sure that you have these right pieces in place so that you can grow. Because once you have these pillars, once you have things set up so that you can really build that resilience into your business, in these different areas, you're going to be able to scale even faster.

In my business growth formula, there's three areas that we focus on in order to scale your business to seven, eight, nine, 10 figures. And those three areas are building that resilience, building your impact, making that impact, but also building your wealth, not necessarily your wealth in income, but your wealth and profit, but also building a wealthier lifestyle, not only for you, but also for your employees and the people around you. So when you focus on that resilience first, there are so many things that you can do to really scale your business even faster.

So I hope this episode helped you. I want you to be a business badass just like I was. But I learned to be a business badass by experiencing the things that needed to really happen to build a stronger foundation, a foundation that's built on resilience, a foundation that's built from the inside out, not starting with money, but starting with people and connections. So I hope this episode helped you. I would love for you to leave me a review on iTunes and just let me know what part of this episode really resonated with you.

And also if you want to get daily motivation, weekly motivation from me, and more information on how you can really start to build a strong foundation in your business, you can sign up. I have a new program. You can sign up to get text messaging from me. And yeah, it's actually me that creates these text messages. It's not a robot. It's not my assistant. It's me. And I send out weekly, sometimes daily messages. So if you want to sign up, you can go ahead and text (610) 215-2838. And I will send you a response and we will get started.

But until next time, I hope you have a wonderful rest of your week. I hope you really think about these things, because again, the world needs small business. The world needs good leaders. The world needs really good businesses built on a strong foundation more than ever. So I hope you choose to take that challenge to really dig in and find these things, find the gaps in your business so that you can focus on building a much healthier, stronger business. Until next week. Have a wonderful rest of your day. Take care.