

I had a conversation with my mentor recently, and I asked him, I said, "What is the secret behind making your business work?" I said, "Why is it that some people make it and some people don't?" And he looked at me and he said, "Theresa, do you want to know the difference between the people that succeed, the people that end up achieving all the things that they want to achieve, and the people that don't?" And I was like, "Yeah, I just asked you that question." And he looked at me and he said, "The difference is they're willing to do the work. They're willing to make the commitment to do the work no matter what happens and keep going."

So I wanted to concentrate this episode on really the work that needs to be done right now. There's so many things happening. As predicted costs are going up even more, inflation is going up, people's spending is going down. And if you've been to the grocery store lately, eggs are a ridiculous price. Ridiculous for a variety of reasons. But as small business owners, as local business owners, we can't let these circumstances dictate the actions that we're going to take next. It's a brand-new year full of brand-new challenges, but also lots and lots of brand-new opportunities because of the circumstances that are happening.

But what we have to do is we have to be willing to do the work, the work that needs to be done. That doesn't mean to hustle your butt off and work 14-hour days, 16-hour days and burn yourself out. That's not what that means. It also doesn't mean that you go into crisis mode and you think that you need to be everywhere, do everything, be the person that is controlling everything, because the only thing that you're going to do is prevent the results from actually happening.

So what does it mean to do the work, to really focus on doing the work? Because that, again, is what's going to set apart the people, the business owners, who make it through all of these crazy things that are going on right now and get to the other side and achieve the massive results that they've been looking to achieve. And those that don't make it, that burn themselves out, that get frustrated, that resent their business, potentially close, and who knows what else.

So there's a couple things I wanted to talk about as it relates to really focusing on doing the work. Because as I said, we are in a time where we are, and it's like I said, it's a brand-new year, brand-new everything. Brand-new challenges, brand-new obstacles, brand-new opportunities, and brand-new times of growth. So again, I wanted to talk about things that we can do. I'm going to give you three things that you can do, as well as some opportunities right now that as a local business owner you have because of everything that's happening.

So the first thing I wanted to talk about is people. I know for a while now, and I don't care what industry you're in. I was at a doctor's appointment last week for my physical, and he was telling me, and that's a major hospital system, one of the top hospital systems in the country, and they're struggling to hire people and they're understaffed. So it doesn't matter really what industry you're in, people are struggling.

But then you also see and hear about... Last week I heard about three people who were laid off from big companies and they're out looking for work. So as a local business, a small business, and I've said this before, if you listen to my podcast on a regular basis, I talk a lot about being agile and the power that we have, our superpower being small, is that we have the ability to be agile. We have the ability to pivot very quickly and shift gears when we need to, depending on what's happening out there in the world.

We also have the ability to implement things a lot faster than a lot of bigger companies do. So right now, and I know people have been struggling to hire people, but right now, you have a lot of these big corporate companies laying people off because of what's going on in the economy and just because of what's going on in the world. So what that does for us is that opens up the talent pool. That opens up

the talent pool for people who have really good skills, who now are struggling to find work, and are looking for something.

And the other thing that I've realized also is these people that have come out of corporate, me, myself included, when I started my business, these people who are coming out of corporate are frustrated with the whole corporate mentality, the corporate world, all the hurdles you have to jump through, and just the corporate bull crap. So they're looking for a different way, a different culture, a better culture than what they were used to. And what that means is that you have the chance to hire some really, really good people, really good people, and really get a lot of really good ideas that you may not have thought about before in your business, and just get a fresh new perspective.

One of the key things for this year, one of the key things, no matter what kind of business you have, is going to be innovation. Because people are spending differently, because inflation is up and costs are up. I'm about ready to get a new car. And we went on, I think it was the 28th of December, and between then and yesterday, the interest rates went up so much that they locked me in at the lower rate, thank heavens. So anyway, so again, costs are up, interest rates are up, spending is down, people are spending differently. There's a lot of fear out there, but we want to innovate. Innovation is so key. You've heard me say it, that innovation, where is it born from? It is born from diversity in thinking, diversity in experiences, and being able to let go of fear, the fear of being different, the fear of doing something different, and just the fear of that it might not work.

So you have these people that are coming out of corporate, you have this talent pool that is opening up and can bring a different perspective into an entrepreneurial environment. And having that ability to think entrepreneurially is going to give us that innovation. But also what's going to give us that innovation is the diversity in thinking, the diversity in backgrounds, and that ability to let go of the fear of having it flop.

So with this new talent pool that's opening up, you have the chance to hire some really, really good people. Yes, can you offer the same salary that a corporate job was paying? Maybe, maybe not. But what you do have the ability to do is offer that flexibility and that ability for people to really explore their creativity and their creative ideas.

So this could be found in developing new standard operating processes. If you have a restaurant, in the kitchen, it could be getting some different opinions and different ideas for up-leveling your food quality or having the kitchen function as a better team, a more cohesive team. How can you make it a lot easier? How can you streamline opening processes and closing processes? If you own a digital business, bringing talent in from this talent pool that we have now, allows us to... Let's say you have a digital business and you're a weight loss company. Bringing those different perspectives in will, number one, a lot of times they're really good with conflict resolution, especially if, let's say you're bringing in some kind of a salesperson. They might have the ability to handle objections and conflict resolution a lot different and better because they probably handled it on a much higher volume than maybe your business has to deal with things like that.

So looking at these people and being willing to say, they have, even though they haven't worked in a local business, even though they may not have worked specifically in the type of industry that you're in, they might have human skills, people skills that you need in specific positions, as well as those physical skills that, even though they were in a different industry, can apply to your business and help you to do things that you may not have been able to do before.

So looking at what's going on and you hear about it. Like I said, last week, I heard three people who got laid off from corporate jobs, and looking at them and saying, "Okay, how can I use this to hire people who I need in key roles or to bring people into the organization that we really need in order to help us to

grow faster?" Because again, a lot of people in the space are either cutting people and cutting costs, or they're getting out of the space completely. So if you are a local business owner, you right now have the ability to capitalize on the opportunity of hiring some really good talent and doing things different. Which brings me back to the whole innovation.

So when we're doing this, when we're looking at this talent pool, and we're looking at how can we be more innovative with what we do, how can we solve problems for our customers much more mindfully and much more effectively with what we do? And when we're doing all of this and looking to our people, looking to our people to give their ideas, be creative, and come up with new ways to do things, this is what I call building from the inside out. It is part of defining a healthier culture, a people-centric, team-centric culture that is built on innovation, diversity, sustainability, all the things that I talk about that will help you to move your business forward faster.

With local business owners, with local businesses, and this is whether you are totally digital, totally brick and mortar, or a combination of the both, you have the ability to do this. You have the ability to build from the inside out and do things again a lot faster than a very large organization, because you don't have all the hoops to jump through. And also, when you are working in an entrepreneurial environment, you are much more likely to take risks a lot faster and try things and have them fail and try them again, because again, you don't have all of the layers of stuff that you have to go through like you do in a corporate environment.

So number one, really focusing on, okay, how can I look at these people who are now looking for jobs that weren't looking for jobs before? And how could they help my organization? And be open to that possibility of different ideas, different backgrounds coming into your business to really help you move things forward. So that is number one. All right. And that goes along with the pillar of building from the inside out. Along with asking yourself the question consistently, asking yourself, how can I solve problems for my customer in a much more mindful and effective way that relates to what they want, that brings together what they really want and need, and what you do really, really well? And when we do that, that's how we're able to zoom out from what's happening just here and today. Zoom out to what it is that you really want to do differently, and how can you then move it forward?

That's how we can focus on resetting that vision. Just because you've been going down one path and you've been doing things a certain way for so long, doesn't mean, and really, you shouldn't just continue to say, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." You should really be looking at things and saying, "How can we help our customers even more? How can we solve a problem for our customers even more that aligns with the things that we're really strong at?"

I had a conversation with somebody last week, and we were talking about resetting their vision, and they're in an industry that has faced a lot of challenges over the past three years, and are facing challenges now with all of the rising costs that we have. And when we were resetting the vision and how can we solve a problem, how can we innovate, it kept coming back to, well, we need to get staff, and this won't happen until we get staff, and that won't happen until we get staff, and this won't happen until... And I at one point, I said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Let's hit the pause button. Let's stop. Because every time you say, 'It won't happen until we X', you're thinking about it backwards."

So when you are thinking about resetting, what problem are you solving? If you're a retail store, it could be creating a different type of experience for people. It could be detailing out the stories about the products that you sell. If you're a digital weight loss company, it could be how can you build a stronger community that makes people feel like human beings and not patients? Or whatever that looks like. But thinking about it and talking about it as if it's already happened. Not the whole premise of, once we have this, once we have the right people, then we'll be able to do this, and then we'll achieve the results that we want to achieve. Then we'll achieve our five million or then we'll achieve whatever it is.

And that's wrong. That's wrong. And if you're into the law of attraction, this is where people get these universal laws messed up. You have to think about it and be those people first. So when you're looking at this and you're zooming out, you're saying to yourself, or maybe even ask your team the question, "Who do we need to be right now in order to grow our top line revenue 20%, grow our profitability 20%, build a team of high-impact managers or high-impact leaders that can lead our front of the house staff?" Or whatever it looks like. Who do we need to be now in order to achieve the things that we want to achieve?

So [inaudible 00:17:43] from that be [inaudible 00:17:46] have. So we understand this is what we want to do. And then what we do is we back it up with the right actions. The right actions. So that then we'll end up getting the results that we want to get.

So this goes back to what I started off with is what is the right work that we need to do? If you take notice, so far through this episode, I have not once said, "Put 5,000 things on your to-do list." Or not once did I say, "You have to get up at 4:30 in the morning and work until 10:30 at night and do it all over again the next day." Not once did I say any of that. Not once did I say that you need to do absolutely everything in your business. No.

So the right work is finding the right people, using the challenges that are happening today and looking for the opportunities in them that you can bring into your brick and mortar business, that you can bring into your local business. Because local business, that is what is going to keep our economy going. That is what is going to keep communities thriving.

So doing the right work is finding ways that you can build that high-impact, high-growth, growth-focused team and build that people-centric culture within inside your brick and mortar business. And doing the things that you need to do to stay focused on that vision, that vision that is all about how can we solve problems for our customers in a much more effective way?

So as a business owner, the right work, the work we really need to do is to really stay above the line, to let go of trying to control the results and trying to control and force things to happen, and instead to focus on connecting our people together, to focus on getting our vision out there and defining it. And to also focus on how can you innovate this year? How can you innovate to create a more unique experience, a place that people want to come back to time and time again? How can you blend together digital technology with a physical experience, whether it's via Zoom or live in your brick and mortar store? How can you create that innovation that is going to set you apart this year?

And as I said, it is way easier to do this as a brick and mortar local business than it is for bigger businesses. I've had clients that have looked at me and have said to me, "You are absolutely out of your mind. They have bigger budgets than I do. They have more money. They have more people. They have been out there and people see them because they're all over." And my answer is always, "It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. What matters is that you find the gaps in your industry, you find the gaps in your business and you fill them."

And how do you fill them? With innovative ideas, creativity, and really good people. And then how do you fill those gaps in your industry that the bigger can't do? By exactly that. Finding those gaps and seeing how you can fill them with what you do the best. How can you fill them with what you are strongest at?

So for example, if you are a brick and mortar business, you're a brick and mortar restaurant, and you know that you are really good. Let's say you're a whiskey bar and you know you're really good with understanding the whiskeys and understanding the education. But there's another big chain down the street that does the same thing. How can you stand out more? Well, you have the ability to be more personalized. You have the ability to connect with the customer on a different level because you don't

have the volume coming in yet. It could be a variety of things. You just need to be creative and continue to think to yourself, what do I need to do to bring more innovation into my business this year?

This is the work that we need to do to stay. And what it comes down to, if I can just wrap it all together, is to have that commitment and make the declaration that you are going to have 2023 be a phenomenal year, to not just chase goals, not chase money, not chase results, but actually stay focused on to make a declaration and do the right work, and stay committed to what needs to really happen.

So in that same conversation that I had with my mentor, and he said to me about the difference between people who make it and people who don't, he also said to me, "Goals are built on hope. Declarations are built on commitment." What are you committed to? And that hit really hit home for me. And I thought about it and I was like, "You know what? This is right." Because a lot of people just are chasing goals. They just chase goals and they hope that it'll happen.

And then other people who make that declaration and say, "I am going to do X this year." So mine is, I am going to finish writing my book. I make that declaration, and then I just put the work into the critical steps that I need to make that declaration happen. And I make the declaration as if it already happened.

So think about these things. If I'm just going to tie it all together, think about the things that we talked about. Building from the inside out, using the challenges and what's happening right now to find really good people for your business. And to also bring in new ideas and new innovation, new ways of doing things from diversity in thinking, diversity in backgrounds, diversity in experiences.

Then also, how can you zoom out? How can you look at your business and say, "How can we solve problems in a much more meaningful, effective way for our customers, for what they want, that aligns with what do we do best?"

And then the last one is taking this innovation and looking at it and saying, "How can we up-level our experience in our business to keep people coming back time and time again?" You can do it. I have faith in you. Don't just set goals this year, but actually make the declarations of the maybe three things that you're going to do this year to move yourself closer or move your business closer to the results that you want to achieve. And I'll tell you, as clear as I know things, when we do that, we get our mindset, we get the thinking in between our two ears right, which aligns then with the actions that we take every day, and the results that we want are just right around the corner. You just need to do the right work.

So here's to an amazing new year, and if you need some help, and you're looking like, okay, Theresa, I think I got this, but I'm not quite sure how to put this all together, well, I've got a free before. You can go ahead to [theresacantley.com/strategicplan](https://theresacantley.com/strategicplan) and download my guide, my worksheet that I actually put together for my own clients, and walk through it. It walks you through five key areas that you want to set your strategic plan for this year. Five key areas that you can make declarations in, in your business, to achieve the things that you want to achieve. So make sure you go to [theresacantley.com/strategicplan](https://theresacantley.com/strategicplan).

And I would also love if you could leave a comment below this episode and let me know, or leave a review. Let me know what you are doing, what declarations you have for this year, and what right work are you going to do this year to move yourself forward. So until next week, have a wonderful rest of your week, and let's all take care of each other just a little bit more than we did last year, than we did yesterday. All right. Bye for now.