



Productivity Measurements of Success with Tanya Dalton

Episode #30

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Lisa Larter (00:01):

Welcome to, She Talks Business. If you're an entrepreneur, business owner or aspiring mogul, chances are you want to learn more about marketing and mastering and monetizing your business. She Talks Business is where you'll learn all of that and more. My name is Lisa Larter and I'm an entrepreneur, high school dropout, wiener dog enthusiast and your host. Let's get started.

Lisa Larter (00:25):

Hello, everyone. We have a fantastic show lined up for you today with Tanya Dalton. Now, Tanya Dalton is a colleague, friend of mine that I met through Ali Brown at The Trust. She's a bestselling author. She is a productivity expert. She runs a business called the Intentional CEO and she also is the CEO of inkWELL Press Productivity, which is one of my favorite productivity planning companies. I have to say, I built a planner, I bought her stuff, I love it, it is a game changer. You can move the pages around and organize your stuff the way you want it. But that is a sidebar.

Lisa Larter (01:15):

We are going to talk today about productivity and the impact that productivity has on your results. And so, I want you to listen in because there are some really interesting stuff in here. This is not all about numbers. This is really about being intentional with how you spend your time. And when you are intentional with how you spend your time, the impact that it can have on your results. You're going to hear a great story of a \$45,000 mistake. You're going to hear Tanya talk about container thinking, which is an amazing strategy for getting things done. You're also going to hear her insights on why we need to stop just looking at our wins but we really need to look back at the biggest obstacles and challenges that we face in our business. Because



there is so much learning that you can mine from the mistakes that you have made, that you can carry forward to really, really have incredible results in your business.

Lisa Larter (02:17):

And then, for those of you who hate the numbers and you hate doing your bookkeeping and all that stuff, Tanya is going to share what she does on Financial Fridays, which is going to help you potentially stop avoiding looking at those numbers in your business. This is a really great episode. And it's great because there's a lot of really practical and applicable things that you can do that Tanya talks about. So, I hope you love this show. And if you do, you know the drill, share it with somebody who needs to learn this stuff and leave a review on your favorite podcast station so that I know you like the show.

Lisa Larter (02:58):

I actually got a message on Facebook from Darlene today before I started the show telling me that she's looking for reasons to walk her dog so she can listen to the show because she's enjoying it so much. Things like that really make my day. So thank you, Darlene, for listening and for taking a moment to let me know that you love the show. And now, let's get started.

Lisa Larter (03:19):

So, I'm here today with Tanya Dalton. And we just did a recording reset because I did a major faux pas and pronounced her name the wrong way. And, for me, that's a really serious thing because I think pronunciation of people's names, first names and last names, is a sign of respect. So I'm one of those nerdy people that always asks people with names that I've never heard before the proper pronunciation. But when I saw Tanya's name, I thought I had it down right? And I should know better because I actually know her in real life. So anyways, onward.

Lisa Larter (03:53):

We just wrapped up our second season on a summer of reading. I hope you love some of the authors we talked to and books that we featured. And now, we are into season three, which is all about business metrics. And before we get into the details of what I want to talk to Tanya about today, I want to mention that the reason we have seasons and themes and topics that we're

so organized on the show is because of her. So, I had this whole outline built for my podcast. And then, Tanya and I are both members of The Trust. And we had a conversation at lunch one day about her podcast and she told me how she approached it and I was like, "I'm stealing that. It's just so smart."

Lisa Larter (04:42):

So, I should expect nothing less than smart and organized and strategic from a productivity expert. Welcome, Tanya.

Tanya Dalton (04:51):

It's so good to be here. Yes. And I'm glad you stole the idea. That's the thing is I love sharing ideas because let's make our businesses easier. Let's make them so they aren't so complicated. And let's share that wealth. Right? Yeah, I love it.

Lisa Larter (05:06):

Absolutely. Absolutely. So, we are coming off of a summer reading. So, books are on the brain. What book have you read in your business, not one that you wrote, but one that you read, that radically transformed the way you think about business?

Tanya Dalton (05:24):

That's a really good question because I'm always reading books about my business, or what I think I want to do to my business. Gosh, really, for me, I read a lot of books on productivity and those kinds of things I love. I'm a total nerd when it comes to that kind of stuff. I love to watch *How It's Made* and study how the machines work and to see how all those moving parts work. So, really, for me, a book like *Essentialism* was really important in to, I now am friends with Greg McEwen, the author of that book.

Tanya Dalton (05:58):

But it was the first time that I was like, "Oh, I could write a book like this. I could do something like this as well." I always thought when I was younger, I wanted to be an author. But I always thought it'd be like children's books or something like that. But to write about what I am passionate about, to write about what I teach other people. I feel like that was the book where my eyes were wide open. And I thought, "Wow, this is something I can totally do."

Lisa Larter (06:25):

Yeah. He wrote a really, really amazing book. I love that book. I read that book too. And I'm trying to remember, he's Canadian, isn't he?

Tanya Dalton (06:34):

I believe he is.

Lisa Larter (06:35):

Yeah, I think he's from just outside of Ottawa. Anyways, his book was fantastic. I really enjoyed that book too. So, I think that is a great book pick. Absolutely. So, speaking of books, the reason that you and I started really talking about the podcast is because I asked you a question at lunch about how you got your first book deal, because your book is not self published, you got some pretty fancy pants publisher behind you. So, can you share that with us? Because I think it's really powerful. I think, when we think about podcasting, a lot of times we think about marketing and when we think about what everybody else is doing. They're on TikTok. They're on Instagram. They're podcasting. They're blogging. I had to do all that stuff.

Lisa Larter (07:25):

But when you're really intentional about something, some pretty amazing things can happen. So, can you share that story?

Tanya Dalton (07:32):

Yeah, I would love to, because I think you're right. And I think that's one of the issues we experience as business owners is that little bit of squirrel syndrome, it's like, "Do I do this? Do I do that? Do I go over here? Do I go over there?" There's a lot of shiny objects. And you feel like you have to be on everything. And you don't. You really don't. You have to choose where you really want to focus. And it really is about whatever platform you choose to be on, whatever platform you think speaks most to you, what I like to call your soulmate clients, the people that you really ideally want to work with, is to really make it the best you possibly can to be very intentional about it, which my podcast is called the *Intentional Advantage*.

Tanya Dalton (08:12):

Because I like to say, people come in the door because I talk about productivity. They come in the door and I'm like, "It's really about being

intentional." And so, it is intentional living. So, it's the same thing with the podcast is I wanted it to be the best podcast out there. I'm not on every single platform. And if I'm going to do a podcast, I want it to be amazing. So, I created seasons, which I've talked to you about and explained to you. And I just was doing what I do, focusing in on the podcast, making these recordings having on some guests, and I guess it was probably, I guess it's maybe a year and a half into doing my podcast, I got an email, kind of out of the blue from a publisher saying, "We love your podcast. It's amazing. We love how intentional you are with it. We love the topics you're covering and how you weave everything together. We would love to publish a book with you."

Tanya Dalton (09:05):

And I thought, "What? I mean, oh, wow." Right? Out of the blue. And it's funny because every year, I come up with like, "Do I want to write a book? Is this something that I want to do?" And I always think, "No, no, no, now is not the time, put it on the shelf." And so, I got this publisher who reached out and I thought, "I already made the decision. I wasn't going to write a book this year." Two weeks later, a second publisher reaches out, "We love your podcast." And I was like, "Okay, this is a sign from the universe clearly telling me that this is time for me to write a book. Two publishers within a two week period reach out telling me they want me to write a book and they want to publish it for me."

Tanya Dalton (09:44):

And so, I took that as a sign. And to be honest with you, that was a tough decision because I was like, "Do I stop and just say yes to one of these? A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, right? Or do I step back and decide to be intentional and choose what I want to write? Do I step back and decide that I want to do this the right way and be really intentional? And that's what I did. I told both publishers, "You know what? I need some space. I want to step back. I want to really decide what I want to write about. I want to go ahead and get an agent, because I need somebody to navigate this, who knows more than I do in this industry."

Tanya Dalton (10:17):

And so, I did that. I took some time. It took a couple of months to really map out a book proposal and what it was I would want to write, not what they asked me to write when they reached out to me. And put it out into the

publishing world, send it to several different publishing houses. And I ended up getting seven offers from major publishing houses. Seven.

Lisa Larter (10:39):

It's amazing.

Tanya Dalton (10:39):

From a girl who was contacted out of the blue. And so, the book ended up going to auction with the different publishing houses taking, bidding, auctioning on my book, and I ended up getting a two-book deal with HarperCollins. And so, that is who my books are now published with. I had *Joy of Missing Out* that came out in October of 2019. And my next book, which is called *On Purpose: The Busy Woman's Guide to an Extraordinary Life of Meaning and Success*, that comes out October of this year.

Tanya Dalton (11:10):

So, podcasting is one of those things where it's like, it can be your vehicle. It's not just something that you do and it's a lot of work and it's just marketing, free marketing. This can actually be the vehicle that gets you where you want to go, especially if you pour yourself into it and you do it with intention. I think that's what differentiated me in that crazy busy marketplace of podcast hosts.

Lisa Larter (11:31):

Yeah, I love it. Because I think your intention when you started your podcast was to really bring value and be intentional in that work. You weren't starting the podcast to get a book deal. You weren't starting that podcast to get a client. It was about providing value. And then, what happened is when you got approached and again, you were very intentional about what you did with that, you ended up really with something extraordinary. Who do you know today that gets seven publishers bidding over their book? It's not easy in this world we live in where everybody and their dog has a self-published best seller on Amazon.

Lisa Larter (12:13):

So, I think, that is just really, really amazing. And the other thing that I would say about that is one of the things that you said is, after I had been recording my podcast for about a year and a half. Most people don't make it to a year.

Most people don't make it to a year and a half, because they don't have the systems and processes in place or the staying power to keep going that long. I mean, I feel it right? I look at my own podcast and I'm still such a newbie and I remember when I was around Episode 10 thinking, "Oh my god, am I going to make it? Am I going to keep doing this?"

Lisa Larter (12:53):

So, it really does require that intentional mindset and commitment to getting it done. Absolutely.

Tanya Dalton (13:04):

Yeah. And, really, it's it goes back to that whole why. Why are you doing it, right? It's not about, I'm going to do these things and this is going to happen. Like you said, I didn't go into it thinking, "This is going to give me a book deal." Otherwise, I might have totally approached it differently and probably would have ended up with no book deal at all.

Tanya Dalton (13:23):

Instead, I gave myself genuinely to what I wanted to create for my listeners, what value I wanted for them to get out of what I've created. And I think that type of intentionality, people can sense, they can feel, they understand that your ulterior motive is just to help them. And when you go in with those types of why and what it is you're creating, people resonate with that. And it magnetizes them to what you're creating, no matter what it is, whether it's a podcast, or a blog, or whether you're on clubhouse or whatever vehicle you're using, it's truly just deciding to be the best version of you there, instead of trying to do it everywhere.

Tanya Dalton (14:03):

And yes, create systems to make your life easier. Systematize it. Make it easier. I remember when I first started, I thought, "am I going to run out of topics? Am I going to run out of things to say?" And my husband laughed and was like, "Have you ever run out of things to say?" And so, I started with a brain dump of just dumping out tons and tons of ideas of what I could do, what I could talk about, and then grouping them. And that's how seasons began to happen for me. And so, that's just continued.

Tanya Dalton (14:34):

Clearly, I've not run out of ideas because I'm 200 some odd episodes into the podcast at this point and with no sign of stopping. But yes, it's really about creating ways to make that easier so you can go in and focus on that why. Not the how-to, not the how do I need to do these things, getting other people on the team too to help you out, that make a difference.

Lisa Larter (14:56):

Yeah. Absolutely. One of the things that I did when I was starting my podcast is I had recently read Dan Sullivan's book *Who Not How*. And he has this process called the Impact Filter. And so, I literally sat down and filled out an impact filter, which really helped me to get intentional and clear about why I was doing it. So, I think you're right, the clearer you are on why you're doing something, the more effective it's going to be.

Lisa Larter (15:25):

So, one of the things that I always say to my clients is, "You can't ride two horses with one ass. You can't chase two bunnies, or you won't catch either one." And yet you run two different businesses, you run the Intentional CEO and you run inkWell Press. So, can you talk to me a little bit about that? What came first? The chicken or the egg? And how are you managing both of those businesses? And are there some strategies? Because the season is really all about metrics and measurements of success, what are you doing to ensure that both of those lanes are performing optimally?

Tanya Dalton (16:13):

I love this question. Because I think a lot of people are multi-passionate. They're like, "Oh, I like this idea. I want to do this, I want to do that." And so, they want to just right out of the gate, they want to have two, three. So, I've seen people who are like, "I have five companies." And I'm like, "Well, how are the five companies doing?" Right? We have to start there. We start with one area of focus. And that's what I did. I really focused in on what it was I wanted to create to start.

Tanya Dalton (16:39):

And so, my first company, well, I should say I had a company before, I closed it down. My first company with this iteration is Equal Press, which are the productivity tools, the physical products where you have planners, daily

planners, weekly planners. Now, with those, I really wanted to make sure I was doing something very different in the marketplace. And when I came on to the market, in that field, nobody else was doing anything like I was doing. And I was able to do that because I was so focused. I was the first one to really include goal setting. And I created a set of videos that go through the planner, not just how to use the planner, but how are you prioritizing your time. So for me ...

Lisa Larter (17:22):

I've watched those videos.

Tanya Dalton (17:24):

Oh yeah, the videos I love because it really gets to the heart of why you want to plan, right? And so for me, I like to say that my three passions that I've connected are empowering women, productivity, and then teaching because I used to be a teacher. And so, when I created inkWELL Press, it had those three components to it, that I had the products, I wanted to empower women, it was focused on women. I had the productivity tools and I wanted to have that education part in there. I wanted to teach people not just how to use the planners, but to make it into a product that helped them live their best life.

Tanya Dalton (17:56):

So, I started there and really focusing in on the products, getting the systems in place, getting a foothold for the finances, getting a foothold for how I wanted to run everything. Once that was running seamlessly, once we had ... And really, I scaled to seven figures in 18 months with that company, got the systems in place, brought the team on board. And then, I thought to myself, "You know what, I want to do more of the teaching. Now that I've got this running and it's running seamlessly, it doesn't need as much of my attention. Now I can build off of one of those little arms, that education arm. So, I'm going to go ahead and I'm going to start doing the podcast." That's what got me to start doing the podcast.

Tanya Dalton (18:33):

So, I made this little split off where I started doing the podcast and teaching and coaching and focusing on that. And then that grew into the courses and the programs that I offer. It grew into the book, as we just talked about. But

they're very connected. So they're not separated. They are very connected by my mission in life, what I call my north star, my mission, my vision, my core values. So when I started inkWELL Press, I always had this huge vision in mind of being the Franklin Covey for women, so that we had the products but we also have the training and the tools. But I had to first get the products in place and running well. And then, I could split off and start focusing in more on the coaching.

Tanya Dalton (19:14):

And so, that's what allowed me to create that vehicle because I had the income coming in from the products, everything was running smoothly there, then I was able to shift.

Lisa Larter (19:23):

So, do you operate them as one business or do you operate them as two separate businesses?

Tanya Dalton (19:28):

We have them connected. They're in the same umbrella. So, they are basically like DBAs of the same S corporation. And a lot of my team members work on both. And so, I split their time. And so, when I'm looking at things like finances and expenses, I actually divide them up percentage-wise how much time do I think that we're spending for this platform we're using? How much is for the Intentional CEO part of what I do? The coaching part? How much is for the product parts? And in that way, I look at my expenses, a lot of times, in terms of that instead of just looking at the bottom line.

Tanya Dalton (20:04):

And that helps me see where I want to spend my money, how I want to spend my time, all those things.

Lisa Larter (20:09):

Yeah, the reason I asked you this question is because I ride two horses with one bum too. So, I started my business really in teaching and coaching and strategy work. And one day, one of my clients said to me, because I was doing a lot of work when I first started, in terms of how to use social media, to market to your customers. Because at that time, I owned a brick and mortar retail store and I was very successfully using social media to attract

traffic to my business. And so, I began to get a name for myself as someone who understood how to use social media for lead gen.

Lisa Larter (20:50):

And one day, this client said to me, "It would be really great if you could just do it for us, because you're so good at it." And so I thought about it. And I thought, "Well, I probably could. It would be easy for me to do this." So, I put together some pricing options. And lo and behold, to my shock, she picked the most expensive one. And I pretty much secured almost a six figure piece of business out of the gate with that. And then, all of a sudden, the next one came and the next one came and the next one came and then I needed to hire people. And so I am operating, I would call it a digital marketing agency. And I'm doing coaching and consulting and advisement. And so, I keep wondering if I should split the businesses? Or if I should keep them the way they are.

Lisa Larter (21:39):

So, that's why I was asking you that question about how you have it structured?

Tanya Dalton (21:44):

Yeah, I think it depends on how separated that you feel like they are. I feel like ours are very connected in that a lot of times the products that I create really align very well with what I talk about on the podcast, what I coach people to do. I talk about things like throwing out your to-do list and using a priority list, that's incorporated into the products. So, they're very interwoven. So for me, it makes sense to leave them under that one main umbrella.

Tanya Dalton (22:12):

I would say, if they were more separate or different, I probably would run them as separate corporations or separate businesses.

Lisa Larter (22:20):

Yeah. I think, where my brain goes is you have created a brilliant retail product that is highly acquirable. And so down the road, it would not surprise me that you get some type of a great offer on buying that piece of business from you. And when that happens, I mean, from what I know about selling

businesses myself, the numbers need to be really, really clean. And I am in the same situation, nobody's going to buy Lisa Larter's strategy consulting and coaching. But somebody could buy the digital marketing side of the business. I've actually had people offer to buy it. And I'm not interested in selling it right now. But who knows, 5, 10 years out what I may or may not be interested in.

Lisa Larter (23:08):

So, I'm also looking at it from the ability to really evaluate the metrics in a pure sense to see how profitable each arm is. And I got to tell you, when they're woven together, I'm like you, I can assign percentages and allocations. But it's a lot of work to make that happen. At least, it is for me.

Tanya Dalton (23:29):

It is. It's definitely an extra step that you have to be willing to take. But, for me, and the way that I have my business running right now, I feel like it works. And it is really important to understand how much of each product or how much of each platform or whatever it is, goes to each area, because I need to know is one doing okay? How are each one of them doing? You don't want one who's just a sinking stone while the other one's a hot air balloon. And that hot air balloon is hiding all the problems in that sinking stone, right? So, that's why it's really important if you are going to have multiple companies to make sure you have a clear system in place that you're analyzing that and looking at that.

Tanya Dalton (24:07):

Our metrics are so important. They show us the health of our business and it's easy to lose sight of those if your numbers are confusing. I think that's why it's important to regularly looking at your numbers. I have two dashboards that I check each week with my team. So, my team goes in. We have these two separate dashboards that have between 7 to 10 numbers that we look at. And they're different because they're very different companies. But we're looking at what's the lead gen look like on one and what's the lead gen look like on the other? What's the average order size for the products?

Tanya Dalton (24:41):

So, we're looking at very different numbers for the different companies because they have very different health indicators. But we have two separated dashboards. So, each week I'm getting a very quick overview, a snapshot of where the company is. I don't like to just wait until I get my monthly P&L statement and take a look at that. Because at that point, I'm reacting, I'm not being proactive. So, by having these separate dashboards, that allows me to look at the company separately, but also to get a quick just a litmus check, how are we doing? How are things going this week?

Tanya Dalton (25:13):

In that way, I can make shifts and changes as needed for each company.

Lisa Larter (25:17):

Yeah. That's really smart. I have a dashboard too. But as you say that, I'm realizing that my dashboard needs some work because mine combines the two businesses. And although I've got pie charts and graphs to show the different areas of the business, I think, what you're talking about doing in terms of looking at them really separately makes a lot of sense.

Lisa Larter (25:37):

So, talk to me a little bit about business metrics and the correlation between being intentional and productivity. A, I'm using your planner and I love it, I've only had it for a couple of weeks now. The shipping cost me an arm and a leg because I shipped it to Canada, and it was worth every penny, because honestly ... So, here's a shameless pitch for your product, because I am Canadian. And so, you do have to pay international shipping and I had to pay duty.

Lisa Larter (26:15):

And so, I looked at the price of this planner and I asked myself, "Well, how much do I charge per hour? And if this thing helps me be more effective by at least an hour a week, that's a huge amount of money that it's going to benefit me by the end of the year, right?" It's tremendous, the impact. And I've been using it every day for two weeks now. And I love it. And I am recognizing that by being more intentional and really prioritizing what I need to do each day using your system, I am getting so much done. It's not even funny.

Tanya Dalton (26:53):

I love it.

Lisa Larter (26:54):

So, I would love to hear your take on the correlation between productivity, prioritization, intentionalism, all of that stuff and bottom line results in business.

Tanya Dalton (27:08):

Yeah, that's a loaded question, Lisa. I mean, it's got like 17 levels to it for crying out loud.

Lisa Larter (27:15):

I'm sure you can answer it in a really succinct and really impactful way.

Tanya Dalton (27:20):

Well, as I was just saying earlier, metrics, they're the health of your business. And I think it's really important to make sure you're staying on top of these things. And truly, when you are being productive, you are being pro action, right? You're focusing on, really, what it is you want instead of reaction, instead of reacting to things as they crop up. And knowing your metrics allows you to do that.

Tanya Dalton (27:45):

And so, that's how really the productivity part of it ties in. Now, the intentionality is really important because there's 5 billion metrics you could be checking on a regular basis. You can drive yourself crazy. And I think this is the thing is, a lot of times people want to hide from their metrics. They don't look at them because it's so overwhelming. And they're like, "I don't even know where to look." So, part of that intentionality fits into this idea of your north star, your mission, your vision, your core values.

Tanya Dalton (28:14):

What is it? What is it that is your big purpose behind what you're creating with your company that problem that you're solving for your customers and clients? And then, what are the key metrics? Not the metrics, the key metrics that are going to help you see the health of how you're doing. And like I said

a second ago, it's different for one of my businesses from the other business because they're doing vastly different things.

Tanya Dalton (28:38):

So, it's not like I can just sit here and tell you, "Here's the things you need to measure." No one can tell you exactly what you need to measure in your business. That's ultimately up to you and the vision of where you want to go. So, metrics tie in beautifully with being productive, with being intentional, because they make sure that you're staying on that path, that you're on the track to go where it is you want to go. And I think that is what is most important.

Tanya Dalton (29:03):

And that's why we got to take our heads out of the sand. And we have to feel okay looking at the metrics. There are times where the metrics are not good. We all have those weeks. We all have those months where the metrics just are not good. But hiding from it isn't helping you fix that problem. It's just making the problem worse because you're pretending it doesn't exist. It's like not going to the doctor because you're afraid of what the doctor is going to say. You still have whatever illness you've got, right?

Tanya Dalton (29:29):

And it's the same thing with those metrics. So, choosing to be intentional with how you run your business means you have to take a good look. I tell people, "Sometimes, you got to peel back the bandages. You got to look at the wounds or the scars. And sometimes they're ugly, sometimes you don't want to think about it, sometimes you don't want to talk about them." But when we open that up and we allow the light in, we let the air in and we're able to really take a full view of what it is we want, that's how we begin to heal. And that's how we move forward in the direction we truly want to go.

Tanya Dalton (29:58):

And I think that metaphor works in life, with our personal life with our goals, it works in our business life with our goals, it works with us holistically, which I think is so incredibly important. But metrics are just one of the indicators we can use to keep us on that path. Because too, that helps you understand what it is you want to prioritize. We touched on this a little bit about a to-do list is like your metrics. There's too many things on that to-do list. It's taking

you everywhere, but where you want to go. And if the problem is it's confusing, it's unorganized. And you're just tacking things on to the bottom, right?

Tanya Dalton (30:35):

And our brain loves dopamine. It loves checking things off our to-do list. So, we go for the easy wins, which the easy wins, let's be honest, are not generally the things that are going to move the dial in our life, in our business. And so, when we decide to instead be intentional and make a priority list, which takes the exact same amount of time as a to-do list, I like to say it's a to-do list with intention. When we prioritize what we want to spend our day doing, we begin to make those movements forward. That's when we start to see those metrics changing, not just on the page, not just the numbers, but the metrics of how we feel.

Tanya Dalton (31:11):

And I think we as business owners tend to undervalue those metrics. Am I feeling joy? Am I feeling fire in my belly for what I'm doing? When we do the work that has meaning to us that we prioritize, because we know it's most important, that's when we end our days feeling satisfied, feeling successful. That's when we end our days and we say, "Gosh, today was a good day." And I think for far too many women, far too many business owners, they end their days thinking, "So busy all day long, why didn't I get more done?" And they feel defeated.

Tanya Dalton (31:45):

Let's choose to be intentional. Let's prioritize. Our metrics help us see what we want to prioritize. Our priority list, that intentionality, allows us to see where we want our days to go. So, we can go to bed at night and we can feel really, really good. And I think there's a lot of value to that.

Lisa Larter (32:01):

Absolutely. One of the things that I notice in my coaching business is a lot of business owners, and I'm going to say women more so than men, have an aversion to looking at the numbers in their business. And I joked with you earlier, we have no problem getting on the scale twice a day to see if the needle moved with that number. But when it comes to looking at how much money we have in our bank account, or what our profit margins are, how

profitable our business was last month, or when we have to really look at and break apart our pricing approach on things to ensure that we're making enough money to pay ourselves, we tend to get a little wiggy.

Lisa Larter (32:42):

And so, I'm a numbers nerd. I love numbers and I love money and I love wealth building. And I love pressing on different levers in my business to see how it affects numbers. It's just one of those things that I am blessed to really love. I'm curious what you think some of the most important metrics are in business that women should be focusing on? I know you said it's different in every business, and I get that, it's different for some people. But when you are working with someone, what are some of the priorities that you focus on when it comes to the measurements of success in business?

Tanya Dalton (33:24):

I like this question. It depends, again, like we said, it depends on your business. I think, for product based businesses, or I think for both businesses, there's the lead gen. Are you bringing in new leads? And are you converting them? I think those are pretty basic metrics that everyone needs to know. How's my lead generation going? And what does my conversion rate look like? Am I converting customers? Or you could look at, am I converting customers on my website? Or is it on sales calls, or whatever it is that works for you.

Tanya Dalton (33:52):

And I think one of the other key metrics that everyone should be measuring is the loyalty they're getting from their customers. There is a huge difference between a returning customer and a loyal customer. A returning customer comes back again and again. And that's great. But a loyal customer comes back again and again and again, regardless of price, regardless of competition. So, really making sure that you're having that return client or you're having a long term relationship with your customers and your clients, I think, is an incredibly important metric to measure.

Tanya Dalton (34:23):

Because we all know that retaining a customer is a lot easier and a lot less money, quite frankly, than bringing in new customers. But we get so caught up in the lead gen numbers that that's part of that shiny object that's exciting

and the funnels and there's all kinds of things out there, right, that are flashy. And the lead gen is good. We want to know that. But how are we doing with the customers we already have that are existing? Are we taking care of them?

Tanya Dalton (34:47):

So, I'm always checking in with how we do with our customer support? What's our average length that customers are staying with us? Are they using our referral program? How many customers are being referred? So, when I'm looking for my inkWELL Press numbers, we're looking at how many orders we got each week, what the average order amount is, but we're also looking at what percentage was returning customers? Because we want to have a solid base of returning customers, right, again and again.

Tanya Dalton (35:13):

And then the same thing with the other side of my business, the coaching side of my business, we're looking at how long are these customers staying with us? How long are these clients staying with us? Are they moving into other programs and other levels of what we offer as well? So, I think those metrics are really important. You always want to know the bottom line, how much money you're taking in, right? And how much money is going out. That can be a little complicated. The whole expense thing, I like to look at the expenses with the revenue and expenses as part of my P&L statement, because it's all broken down and all of that. That's a once a month activity for me.

Tanya Dalton (35:47):

On a regular weekly basis, though, I'm checking how many orders are we getting in? How many customers are we getting in with the lead generation? What's the loyalty looking like? And with my coaching, what's the activity in the community looking like? Because again, that ties into that whole loyalty. I think that we forget about that in the flashy lead gen that we hear about again and again, that we want to make sure that we're really nurturing and taking care of those existing clients. Because that's our best marketing out there, quite frankly, it's ...

Lisa Larter (36:17):

Yeah. Absolutely. I have built my business on retention of client base, like really focusing on long term retention of clients. And in my coaching

business, I have a client who's been with me for over a decade now. And I joke with people sometimes that, "Someday we're going to break up. Someday you're going to want to work with another coach, and that's okay." And people kind of joke back and say, "Well, as long as you keep learning and taking me further and further in my business, then I'm going to stay."

Lisa Larter (36:48):

And I think that's what you mean by the loyalty factor, especially in both arms of your business, there are other business coaches out there, and there are other productivity planners out there. And so, when people are really loyal to what you have created, you know that there's a tremendous value in those folks staying around. It's a hugely important part.

Tanya Dalton (37:11):

Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think that's why it's so important to know who you want to work with, who your soulmate clients are, who are the people that I really want to sell to whether it's products or whether it's your services, because those are the clients we want to focus in on. How are we keeping that loyalty going?

Lisa Larter (37:27):

Yeah, absolutely.

Tanya Dalton (37:27):

Those people run around with other people just like them. And if you love that customer or that client, get more of them, right? That's what we want.

Lisa Larter (37:35):

Yeah, absolutely. And the ones that suck your will to live are probably not the right ones.

Tanya Dalton (37:40):

Yeah.

Lisa Larter (37:41):

I have a few of those.

Tanya Dalton (37:42):

That suck your will to live, without a question. Every industry, yes.

Lisa Larter (37:47):

So, talk to me a little bit about your biggest money mistake. So, we've all had them, right? We've all done really dumb things when it comes to money in our business because maybe we weren't looking at the metrics or we didn't understand the metrics. We didn't understand the impact. I know I have a horror story related to understanding cash flow and how much money I owed for inventory when I first opened my store that literally almost bankrupted me. We all have those stories. What's yours?

Tanya Dalton (38:19):

Well, I have a couple. My big one, I like to call my \$45,000 mistake. I like to really call out the amount because it hurts, right, that, "Oh gosh, that was a lot." And it was when I was really first opening the doors to inkWELL Press and I had a liaison that I was working with for the manufacturing and it was not working well. And he wasn't very good at communicating and he was missing deadlines and all these other things were happening.

Tanya Dalton (38:50):

And it got to the point where I was like, "I need to get my product now. We have to have it now, it's a dated good. Too much later and they're all spoiled goods basically." And that is how we put it on our line items. They're spoiled goods just like food. Our products are a dated product so therefore it's got spoilage. So, anyways, we said, "We need to airfreight these. We need to airfreight everything to the US because I got to get these into the hands of customers. People were excited about it." On our initial launch, we had over 500 orders come in.

Tanya Dalton (39:21):

And so I said, "We need to airfreight this." And so I said, "How much is this going to cost?" And I asked the liaison, "How much is this going to cost?" And he said, "Four to \$5,000." And I said, "Okay." At the time, I didn't have a lot of money because everything was pouring into starting this company, right? Four to 5000, okay, I think I can do that I can manage that. So, I said, "Go ahead. Let's airfreight it over." And then, I got the bill for \$45,000. Forty-five

is very different than four to \$5. And so yeah, I figure out what to do. I had to scramble.

Tanya Dalton (40:00):

First of all, my big lesson there was, I need to get those quotes myself. This guy had already given me some red flags, I'm not sure why I trusted him. I should have done my due diligence and really researched it, gotten some numbers written on paper, even if they were estimates from the shipping company. They could have estimated at least this is what we think it's going to be. And I would have had an idea and I would have maybe made ... No, I wouldn't have maybe. I would have definitely made a different decision.

Tanya Dalton (40:25):

But at the same time, I scrambled, I figured out how to pay the \$45,000. Thank you very much, Amex for being so generous with business owners and allowing us to extend. But that pushed me. Quite frankly, at that point, I was like, "All right, we got to make up this...it's not just about selling the product, we got to cover this \$45,000." So we got really innovative with our marketing. We got really out of the box. What can we do that's not going to cost us a lot of money but it's going to make a big splash? How are we going to do this?

Tanya Dalton (40:55):

And so, we sat down and we pushed ourselves to really think outside the box. And what we created ended up being named one of the top 10 Facebook campaigns for the entire year. And here we are this teeny tiny company, right, it's just John and I, my husband and I starting it off. But I blame that \$45,000 mistake for pushing me to do something vastly different. And so, a lot of times, these money mistakes, they are mistakes, but there are no mistakes. We're always learning from them. I mean, I'll never make the mistake of trusting a vendor at face value. I want it in writing. I want it sent to me. I want it signed. I want to make sure I followed up. I want to make sure I've done two or three different bids to make sure.

Tanya Dalton (41:36):

I'm not going to make that mistake ever again. It was an expensive lesson to learn without question. But at the same time, it's gotten me where I needed to go. And that campaign we created, I think that helped. I mean, we ended

up selling out of all of our planners that year in no time flat and needing to reorder more product for a dated good in December. We ordered it because ...

Lisa Larter (41:57):

Wow, amazing.

Tanya Dalton (41:59):

So, yeah, sometimes your biggest mistakes are actually something that really helps you

Lisa Larter (42:04):

So, I'm curious though, because you are an eight on the enneagram. So, you're a little bit like me, you're driven and determined and get out of my way we're going to make this happen. But there's probably a lot of people that would have curled up in a ball and cried over that and not been able to turn it around. Why do you think you were able to turn that mistake? You basically made lemonade out of lemons? What was it that allowed you to do that so early on in your business?

Tanya Dalton (42:41):

Yeah. Well, I feel like I've always looked at obstacles as opportunities. When I envision what an obstacle looks like, it's almost like this wall in front of me in a path. And I think to myself, "I have a couple of choices here. I can climb over the wall. I can go around the wall. I can tunnel and go underneath it. Or I can pour some gasoline and burn that to the ground." And that's kind of just been my mantra and my mindset. I feel like as a business owner, you are told no again and again and again and again and again.

Tanya Dalton (43:12):

And if you take no at face value every time you hit an obstacle, every time something is difficult, it's going to be tough going because this is what true entrepreneurial spirit is. Is it seeing the obstacle and choosing to turn that lemon into lemonades? And so for me, it was, I mean, at that point, I had already started advertising about the planners. I had already started talking about it. I was needy. I wasn't needy, I was neck deep, Lisa. I was neck deep.

Tanya Dalton (43:43):

I was committed. So, really, for me, this was do or die. If this is not going to work, then the whole business is going to have to fold up shop before it's even had a chance to open. And I think sometimes when our back is against the wall, that's when we really see what we're capable of. And once you see that you're capable of these things, and this is why I think reflection is so important to look back at the things you've been through. Because there have been tough moments, there have been hard moments, but you've overcome them.

Tanya Dalton (44:09):

I mean, you're alive today because you overcame. And you have to sometimes stop and look how far you've come to realize how far you can go. And that, for me, is really important. Stopping and taking a look, okay, I've overcome this obstacle, I've overcome that obstacle, this obstacle. I can do this again. It doesn't mean I'm excited about overcoming an obstacle. It doesn't mean I'm like, "Bring on more obstacles." But I know I can do it. You have to believe in yourself before anybody else will. If you don't believe that you can see past these obstacles, it's going to be hard for anybody else to buy in on you.

Lisa Larter (44:46):

I think that's so powerful. Because I think that what we do is we look back on our wins and we don't necessarily look back on the challenges that we've overcome and what we've learned from those challenges. Because there's a lot of resourcefulness that happens when we are facing challenge and the resourcefulness is often creativity, it's innovation, it's grit, it's all of this stuff that really build our self-confidence and belief in ourselves.

Lisa Larter (45:19):

But if you don't look at it, it's like you're not mining those challenges for all the good.

Tanya Dalton (45:24):

There's so much good in them. And this is actually one of the things I talk about in my book *On Purpose*, that regret leads to resilience. That we're wired, our brains are wired to move away from pain faster than we will move towards pleasure. We don't decide to skip the cookies until our pants get too

tight, right? Or we don't decide that we need to change the amount of hours we're working until we realize we haven't taken a whole weekend off and our kids are irritated and upset with us.

Tanya Dalton (45:54):

We don't move towards pleasure as quickly as we move away from pain. So, using pain in your past, using the bad things, using the regret gives you something really concrete to push against. To really, when you know what you don't want, it's so much clearer what you do want.

Lisa Larter (46:13):

Yeah, absolutely.

Tanya Dalton (46:13):

And so that's why I think it's so important to mine your past. The first section of my book is called Reflection. That whole section is on reflection because we have to look backwards in order to move forward. We have to. And it's easy to want to look at the bright, shiny things, the easy wins, because we feel good about those. The things that are hard, that's where growth happens. That's how we become resilient and stronger.

Lisa Larter (46:38):

And the things that are harder are the things that it's easy to walk away from too. And we fail to recognize that we're really building our character and strength when we overcome the things that are hard, not the easy stuff. The easy stuff is, it's easy. Okay, I have one last question for you. And I want you to give me a story or an example because this season is all about metrics, right? It's all about moving the needle in your business in some way.

Lisa Larter (47:09):

And so, you alluded to the Facebook work that you did to really move the needle in terms of selling those planners when that mistake happened. Can you think of something else you've done in your business? Can you shine the light on some of your creative thinking, where you did something that really allowed you to get the biggest growth in your business?

Tanya Dalton (47:36):

That's such a good question.

Lisa Larter (47:37):

So, if I look at my business, one of the things that really helped me is I mapped out this strategy around retention of clients. And if I just brought in one new client per month, then I started to do the math, if they just continued to work with us over an X period of time, I would see just ridiculous growth in my business. And that became my strategy. So, is there something specific that you have done that has helped you grow? Because you said that you grew inkWELL into a seven-figure business in 18 months.

Lisa Larter (48:12):

And we both know that there's, I think, less than 2% of women actually hit the seven-figure mark in their business. And am I fair in saying you've hit seven figures more than once?

Tanya Dalton (48:24):

Yes.

Lisa Larter (48:24):

So, I'm in the same camp. It's not an accident. It's happened over and over and over again. So, we're doing something different. And so, because this is about metrics, I want to know, do you have a little secret sauce, a little something you can share that could help somebody else maybe borrow, steal, model off of what you've done that's helped you.

Tanya Dalton (48:49):

Well, I don't know if this fits your bill, but I think it might. So I, like many women that you talked about, avoided numbers for a while in my business. I didn't want to think about it. I didn't want to talk about it. And it would pile up like this big angry monster, right? Where all of a sudden, you're having to go through all of the finances. And for me, when I decided to confront those head on and create a system for them. I started doing Financial Fridays.

Tanya Dalton (49:15):

So every Friday, that was the theme of the Friday morning. Financial Friday was my day to pay the bills, to look at the finances, to take a good look at the metrics. And that was what shifted a lot of the game for me, quite frankly, was that first of all, I didn't stress about them at other times. I didn't stress about the finances on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, I knew I was

going to focus on them on Friday. And because I was doing it more regularly, I was doing it weekly. It wasn't as big angry monster anymore. It was so much more manageable.

Tanya Dalton (49:48):

But the other thing is, I had a container. I talk about containers a lot with productivity. A container has a start time and an end time. And for something that you're not looking forward to, knowing that there's a start time and an end time to it makes it so much more bearable. Right? It makes it so it's like, "Okay, I'm going to take two hours to just do my deep dive into my finances once a week. And it's going to happen on Financial Friday. And then, I'm going to go do something fun."

Tanya Dalton (50:14):

So, I always plan something fun after an activity like that that I'm not looking forward to like Financial Fridays. And so I created this system, this regular, I like to call them, an automation, just happens every Friday. I don't have to think about it. I don't have to stress about it. It happens automatically. I'm looking at my numbers. I'm able to be proactive with my numbers. I'm able to really start to understand my numbers.

Tanya Dalton (50:35):

And when you start to understand your numbers, you've become so much more powerful. And they lose their control over you and their power because you now understand where they come from, how they work, and you know how you can shift those to work for you. So, I hope that helps answer your question. But for me, that was a game changer just Financial Fridays and making it easy creating that container of time for myself.

Lisa Larter (50:58):

I love that. And I think it's super, super smart, and it aligns with what you do. You're a systems thinker. It totally builds into being intentional and getting things done. And I agree. It's like you got to do the reps in order to get good at anything and get strong at something. And so, what other way can you get strong at numbers than to sit and look at them once a week over and over and over again. You become really good.

Tanya Dalton (51:24):

Don't do anything for two hours. Yeah.

Lisa Larter (51:27):

Yeah, yeah. And if you can't do it for two hours, even an hour is a good place to start, right?

Tanya Dalton (51:33):

Or 30 minutes, baby steps is how we all begin, right?

Lisa Larter (51:36):

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much, Tanya. I really, really, really appreciate you being here. If our listeners want to learn more about you and you had to give them one place that they should follow up with you, learn about you, where would you send them?

Tanya Dalton (51:53):

I would say go to tanyadalton.com. You can find links to my podcast, my books, my programs and everything else right there. That's my hub, tanyadalton.com.

Lisa Larter (52:03):

Awesome. And we're going to add links to your book and your planners and all that stuff in the show notes too. So, if you want to learn more about this infamous planner that I absolutely adore, you can go and learn more about that there. And thank you so much, Tanya. I really appreciate you being here and sharing all of your wisdom and I can't wait to read your new book.

Tanya Dalton (52:27):

Thank you. Thank you. I am so happy to be on the show with you and getting to have this conversation. So, thanks so much for having me on.

Lisa Larter (52:33):

It's great. I love it. I love having conversations about business with super smart women. Thank you for being here.

Tanya Dalton (52:39):

Thank you.



Lisa Larter (52:40):

Thank you for joining me for this episode of She Talks Business. If you enjoyed the show, you know the drill, leave us a review, tell someone about it and join the conversation on social media. Thanks for listening and until next time remember, done is always better than perfect.





Lisa Larter is a Business Strategist, Digital Marketing Expert, Author and Speaker.

The Lisa Larter Group helps their clients to formulate marketing strategies that support their business goals and objectives. Lisa provides consulting & advisory services, and implementation services including: social media & content management, book marketing, and website design.

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