



## A Sales and Strategy Discussion with Nabil Ould-Brahim

Episode #35

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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 (00:24):

Hello, hello, and welcome to this episode of She Talks Business, which is going to be a little bit of an interesting show. We are going to talk about putting growth odds in your favor, or how to maybe stack luck so that it's always on your side. A lot of times people have these beliefs that building a business is hard, it requires so much work, time, energy, and effort, and all of those things are very true. But there are some things that you can intentionally and deliberately do that make your ability to grow and get better results a little easier to do.

### Lisa Larter (01:10):

And so, I'm joined today by a founding member of The Strategy Lab, a dear colleague, client, person that I really, really, really like Nabil Ould-Brahim. And I asked Nabil to join me for this conversation today for a couple of reasons. I have worked with him and his lovely wife, Michelle, for a number of years privately, and I find the... First of all, their personalities are very different, but I love that Nabil is as interested in some of the things that I do, as his wife is. And so, I feel like he just brings this really unique perspective to the table that I wanted to talk to him about. So, I wish I had been recording earlier on



because, Nabil, you said something about networking and luck stacking which was just awesome. Can you tell me what your perception is on why community helps you make money in business?

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (02:17):**

Absolutely. So, first of all, welcome to anyone listening in on this. It's a pleasure to be here. And I can jump right into my perspective of why networking and belonging to a community is so vital to the growth of your business. So, imagine just being a solopreneur, an entrepreneur, or even an employee inside a business: you're working really, really hard day in, day out. But it's really, really tough to hear about opportunities and different ways that you can partner with people or different things that are happening around in your space unless you network. And so, when you network, you grow those connections, you find like-minded people that you like, you have discussions with them, maybe coffee or something, you grow that grouping of people.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (03:07):**

And the way that I perceive it is that that is how you stack luck in your side. Because if you're top of mind, they know you, they know your name, that's when opportunities show up at the most arbitrary times. Sometimes when you're in the worst position in your life, that's when these opportunities show up, and then you feel super lucky. But you don't realize all the work that you put in to foster this network has really just put it all on your side. It's like going to the casino with stacked dice.

**Lisa Larter (03:39):**

Right. As I listen to you say that I'm thinking that it's almost like you're building a spider web around you and every relationship and connection is a strand, but it's not a strand that is weak, it's a strand that is strong. And so, you can pull those people closer to you when you see opportunities for them, and they pull you closer to them when they see opportunities for you. But it is that mutual respect and trust for one another that is what makes it luck. And it's not luck as in, "I'm going to hit the slot machine and hopefully I jackpot." It's more luck by design. Because if I don't know you and I don't know what you do, and I don't know you exist, then I can't tell somebody about you. But the more people who know you, like you, trust you, and

believe in you, the more people that are in your web, the greater the chances are that they will actually tell someone about you.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (04:41):**

100% agree. We can't all do everything in the world that we're interested in so we end up focusing on the thing that we're the strongest at or that makes us the most happy, and in your path in life, you're going to find other people that are doing the exact same thing on things that you wish you did. And that's a fantastic opportunity to be able to partnership with these like-minded people by just being friends with them or acquaintances with them and helping them out when opportunities show up.

**Lisa Larter (05:12):**

Absolutely. When I think back to 2006, when I first opened... And you'll relate to this. Because Nabil is a brilliant software engineer, he has worked for Research in Motion, otherwise known as Blackberry, he's worked for Apple, he's worked for QNX. He's done some really, really, really impressive things in his corporate career prior to working in his own business. I come from a tech background, as well, and when I worked in technology, networking to me was when you went to an event and you bought a table for eight and you sat with people you know.

**Lisa Larter (05:48):**

When I opened my own business in 2006, I realized that networking was when you went to a room full of strangers and you met new people, and that the vast majority of people that went to network were actually going with the intention of trying to sell you something. And those people, you didn't build an affinity for, the people you built an affinity for were the people that actually wanted to get to know you, the people where value was reciprocated. And every single organization, every networking group I became part of, what I noticed is I ended up getting business, and I didn't get business because I was trying to sell, I got business because I was building relationships. It really does work.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (06:34):**

100% agree. And if you were an employee... I remember being at QNX as an employee, and my first year I worked so hard. I put in so much overtime. I was like, "I'm going to get the best raise of my life." And my raise was

lackluster, and I was like, "Why?" And the way that usually the corporate world is structured is that your boss reviews your performance, then he goes with all the other bosses, and then they review the performance across the board of everyone. So, now, you have to rank all the employees in the business and then they get the top whatever, get the highest raises, and so on and so forth. And so, I realized that, "Hey, I could stack the odds in my favor if I got to know all the other managers, and if I networked that way and I could show that I'm a strong, intelligent individual who's very, very driven and wants to just grow and learn." And so, I did that, and literally the next year I got the highest raise that they could award.

**Lisa Larter (07:27):**

Yeah. Smart. Same thing is true in business. The more relationships you build with people, the more value you provide to other people, the more value you attract back to you. So, it's interesting because when I think about community, I also think about the value of learning. You said something to me that really shifted my thinking a couple of years ago. We were on a call one day, and I said to you that at some point in time, you would outgrow me as a business advisor. And I said that I wanted you guys to know that when that time came, it does not have to be an awkward conversation, that I respect that coaching relationships typically have a shelf span and at some point you're looking for something different. And we would still always be friends regardless of when the time came that you wanted to work with someone else.

**Lisa Larter (08:33):**

And you looked at me and said, "I disagree. I don't think that's ever going to happen." And I looked at you like you were crazy because I fully expected it to happen. And you said something that will forever change my perception of myself. You said, "Lisa, you are always learning, and because you are always learning, I feel like you're always teaching us something new and I am always trying to keep up with you. Therefore, I don't feel that I am ever going to outgrow what you offer unless you stop learning." Do you remember saying that?

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (09:11):**

I stand by that to this day. In fact, it's even more imperative on the learning front. So, I'm in Lisa's Thought Readers community and it's fantastic. We read

awesome business books every single month and talk about them, and Lisa brings in cool authors so that we can ask them questions. And we most recently read *Scrum: The Art of Doing Twice the Work in Half the Time*. And I had already read this about six years ago, so I was like, "Oh yeah, I'm really well versed. I'll just skim through this and fly by. It won't be anything too challenging for me," because I'd already done Scrum in my corporate world. And I went through it and I realized that the perspective that I had when I read it six years ago and the perspective that I have now are completely different. So, what I took out from the book was very different, even though it's the same book. So, it just goes to show that you're constantly learning. Even if you and I learn the exact same thing at the same time, you're gonna take it in differently than I am.

**Lisa Larter (10:18):**

Yeah. Insights and perspective. Right? We had a conversation about that book and I was looking at the Scrum approach from a service business perspective, and you are looking at it from a software engineering perspective, and so there was really mutual learning, which I love. I think that we all have so much to learn from each other when we take the time to listen to different points of view. Which leads me to The Strategy Lab. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about The Strategy Lab today, because I believe The Strategy Lab is one way that you can put growth odds in your favor. And the reason that I believe that is because it is a community that is rooted in learning, and it's not just rooted in learning from me, it's rooted in co-creation, collaboration, and even member-led learning.

**Lisa Larter (11:21):**

So, to give the audience, those of you listening, a little bit of background, The Strategy Lab is a program that I created partway through 2021, and I really wanted to create a community of like-minded people who are interested in learning growth strategies to help them build their business. But I didn't want it to be the type of community where you try to keep everyone at arm's length and they DIY it; I wanted it to be a community where people co-created, where we had conversations about what the next learning should be, where we had regular quarterly planning sessions to remind ourselves of what our priorities and goals and objectives really were. And I wanted to foster an environment where members are always helping members or members are being given opportunities to help members.

**Lisa Larter (12:20):**

And so, Nabil, I'm curious. I'm curious as to what your experience has been as a founding member of The Strategy Lab, because you've done a lot of the... You've worked with me privately, you've come to Roadmaps, you've been in Thought Readers, so you've done a lot of things. And so, what is your take on The Strategy Lab as an entrepreneur who is in the lab with your partner and spouse, your wife, what is your take on being a founding member in The Strategy Lab?

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (12:59):**

So far, it's been fantastic. I think if you're listening into this and you're wondering how you would feel being inside this community, it's very comforting, it's very cozy in a positive way. I find the last couple years, the last year and a bit with COVID, it's been very isolating. We haven't been able to go out and do networking opportunities and everything's moved online. There's something missing. And then, Lisa opened up this Strategy Lab and she asked us by invitation if we wanted to join, and we came in and it's been fantastic ever since. Even though everything is online, remote, I still feel like there's a sense of belonging. I go inside The Strategy Lab, I follow each and every single one of the monthly lessons, we do the quarterly plans, and it's great.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (14:00):**

I'm able to learn from Lisa, her team, other people, I'm able to create and foster relationships with regular and successful business owners, which is fantastic. And I've been able to pitch in ideas to Lisa and tailor the community to ways that I really, really enjoy. So, one of the most recent things that I did was an AMA and I asked Lisa if I could contribute my knowledge in an Ask Me Anything so that the community had easy access to just bring up a whole bunch of questions on things that they don't know about on the technical fronts of any sort of technology, and I'd be more than happy to jump into them, whether I had expertise in them or not. And that's what we recently did and it was fantastic.

**Lisa Larter (14:50):**

And that is a perfect example of luck stacking because you volunteered, I did not pay you, to do an AMA. You volunteered to do an AMA on your own time at a time that worked for you. You received a ton of questions in the

thread prior to the AMA. You set up a Zoom link and brought people in and you answered all of their questions and then published the recording. But by showcasing your gifts and talents, there are now people in that community that know you, know what you do, know what your technical abilities are, and so they have their own spiderwebs. And when they're looking for people who know how to do things that they know you know how to do, you have once again, essentially, stacked luck in your corner, which is a really awesome thing.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (15:43):**

100%.

**Lisa Larter (15:47):**

So, let's talk a little bit about planning sprints. So, in The Strategy Lab, we have quarterly planning sprints, and the reason that I believe quarterly planning sprints are so important is it's foundational to my corporate career. When I worked for a multi-billion dollar corporation, you plan quarterly. You did not plan once a year, you plan quarterly and you measured progress and you evaluated things and you re-forecasted, and it was a really important part of achieving organizational goals in a big organization. And so, I believe that small business owners have never been taught how to plan properly and that we get so busy and distracted by what's going on in our day-to-day lives and businesses, that we often lose sight of the big goals and dreams that we have because we get overwhelmed and just mired down in the work that we have to do.

**Lisa Larter (16:43):**

So, Nabil, what do you like about the planning sprints, and how do they help you, especially given that both you and your wife are participating as individuals... So, it's not like you're on Zoom together. You're doing planning sprints separately in your business. So, can you just talk to us a little bit about what you like and what the value's been and why that works for you guys? Because God knows, if I put you in a breakout group together, somebody sends me a message and says, "Move one of us."

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (17:20):**

That's very true. So, planning sprints, why I like them. If I didn't have a plan, I'm usually pretty much running blind. I'm putting out fires, I'm just focusing

on what I need to get done right now, and I end up, since my business is a service-based business, I end up fulfilling all the demands for my clients and I'm not growing my own business in a strategic, methodical way. I'm letting the way that I operate and the way that I service my clients dictate my growth, which is pretty much losing control of how you want to organize your business. And so, I find the value of those planning sprints, very, very vital, and I like that they're quarterly because it's a piece meal amount. It's every three months I'm able to make a plan for those three months and then tangibly work towards a goal that's going to meet my end goals for the end of the year.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (18:25):**

Otherwise, if I don't do it on a quarterly basis and I don't have these rather large check-ins like four times a year, I end up coming into like November, December and being like, "Oh my God, all my goals that I set at the beginning of the year, I haven't even made any progress. Well, guess I'm just going to push it by another year." And guess what I'm going to do next year. Push it again by another year. And now, I've just completely drifted and let somebody else guide where I'm going to grow my business.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (18:52):**

And then to answer the question about how Michelle and I like to be individuals in these, it's super, super valuable. We bring completely different perspectives to our business. So, we jump into these breakouts, we get access to more people to discuss, we each come up with our own plans for the same business, and then we meet together and we figure out what are the things that worked, what are the things that didn't, what are the things that we both want to get done collectively, and what are the things that we want to do individually? So, there's often times where I come up with an idea and it's not the right formulation of it based on more information that Michelle's had, and vice versa. So, it's as if I get a chance at doing my planning sprint twice for every single individual one.

**Lisa Larter (19:43):**

Yeah. There's another member of the community whose daughter is part of the business and she invested in her daughter being part of the lab, as well, and they do their sprint separately. They feel like they get a tremendous amount of value from each other's perspectives, because it's like you've got

two people working on the business instead of one person working on the business, so it's almost like you get double the benefit of doing the planning. I think it's great.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (20:15):**

Yes. Double the brain power.

**Lisa Larter (20:17):**

So, tell me, the Learning Labs have been foundational to what we've done as a community, and the way that we've structured Learning Labs is... The community often votes on what they want for the next couple of labs. The community often tells me, "Hey, I'd love a lab on this," or, "I'd love a lab on that." We just recently did a lab on best practices for copywriting, and that was the result of somebody specifically asking me, "Could you please do something on copywriting because I'd really like to learn how you know how to write such and such a way." So, tell me a little bit about the labs. What do you like about the Learning Labs opposed to when you buy a program, for example, and it's a DIY, "I got to watch all these modules," whereas the labs are live, they're interactive, we have breakouts? What do you like about the labs? How do they benefit you? And which lab has been your favorite?

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (21:18):**

Love to answer that. So, the first thing you need to know about programs that you buy online is that the minute that you make that buying decision, you're at the biggest high of your life for that program. You're like, "Oh yeah, I'm the most motivated I'm ever going to be. I'm going to do this." Tomorrow, you're not as motivated. The day after, you're less so. A month from now, you probably don't even remember that you bought it. And then a year from now, you have no idea what the login is anymore. And the end result is that about like 50% of the people don't even take it. And I think the stats for like 75% don't even go halfway through a course.

**Lisa Larter (21:56):**

I have a lot of shelf help.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (21:57):**

Yeah. So, they don't work. No matter how much you think it's going to work for you, it doesn't work. So, I find the benefit of these labs is that I get to ask

for the most important thing that I need right now. And then Lisa aggregates everybody's needs and she makes a lab, and you know that your lab's going to come eventually to answer your question. And you're always learning something every single month and you want to show up to these things because it's live, you can ask questions, there's a community. It's not like a pre-recorded thing that you can watch whenever you want, however you want. That type of learning doesn't work for me that well. The live ones work well. And especially within these, we get to have discussions, and it's an extra opportunity to network with other people in the lab and foster those relationships. So, it's not that big of a commitment once or twice a month, and you're continually learning. And once you carve it out in your calendar, it's in there. It actually gets done unlike other things. That's what I love about it.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (23:09):**

My most favorite lab, I think my most favorite lab was one that you did on rocks, pebbles, sands. I've done it so many times. I've been with Lisa for several years and I've probably done this exercise about six times, and every single time I do it differently. And every single time I learn something differently. And the most recent one is that Lisa... So, to explain rocks, pebble, sands, you categorize all your product offerings by the ones that bring in the most value like monetarily, all the way down to the ones that bring in the least amount of value monetarily. So, your rocks are the ones that are the heavy hitters, your sands and stuff that falls in, and then you want to categorize your business as if you're focusing on the rocks, then the pebbles, then the sand, because if you focus on them the other way, then you don't get enough done.

**Lisa Larter (24:02):**

Right. You get stuck in the sand and it becomes a much, much heavier lift to get growth.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (24:07):**

Exactly. And the most recent thing that we did was that Lisa made us draw on a scale where your rocks and your pebbles and your sand were, and we realized that we had a massive gap between where a rock was and where our pebble started and we had nothing to fill in in-between. So, that's my favorite one because I wasn't expecting to learn much and I ended up learning a lot.

### **Lisa Larter (24:35):**

Yeah. When you look at the progression, you can see where the areas of opportunity are. Because if your pebble for example... And the value of a rock, pebble, and sand, there's no hard, fast rule. One person's rock could be \$100 and another person's rock could be 100,000 depending on the type of business they have. Right? If you own a candy shop and you sell single gumballs for 25 cents, and then you have a box of a candy that's 100, well the gumball would be your sand and the box of candy would be the rock. So, it's not about the price, it's about the lineup of products and/or services and the pricing and the placement on that continuum and thinking about your customer and the progression that they want go on when they're on this journey of doing business with you.

### **Lisa Larter (25:31):**

And so, I love the rock, pebble, sand exercise, and I love that continuum or that progression pathway because it really does highlight not only what's missing in between, but where do you go next. So, let say your big rock is 50,000. Well, what's the next big rock? What's bigger than the rock already? So, it just challenges you to think differently about your business. So everybody tells me that... I'd love to say everybody tells me their most favorite part of the labs is what I teach, but everyone tells me the most favorite part of the labs is really the breakout sessions. Why do people love these breakout sessions so much? Is it because I give you the most thought-provoking questions ever? What is it?

### **Nabil Ould-Brahim (26:20):**

Yes. It's 100% the thought-provoking questions every time, Lisa. Being an entrepreneur is so isolating. You feel lonely even if you're in a crowd of other entrepreneurs. The thing that you're doing is unique. No one else is usually doing that or they're not doing it the same way that you're doing it. And so, these breakout sessions are so crucial because we get to talk about our businesses with other people. And we take this lesson that we learned and, in essence, you break it out into the breakout session, you're like, "Okay, well I'm going to talk about how I understood this. You're going to talk about how you understood this. The other people are going to talk about the exact same thing. And then I'm going to tell you what my business is about and give me feedback on it." Introspection is not a skill that we're naturally born with. It's

one that we have to work really, really, really hard at. And it is not a strength of mine. It's something that I've been carefully and methodically working on.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (27:30):**

But the most effective thing that I found is just asking other people their perspective on my business, and they bring in perspectives that I would've never guessed or things... Lisa's told me this countless numbers at times, but she tells me that I'm a fish in water being able to breathe oxygen, not realizing how special being able to breathe underwater is for others. And so, that's what those breakout sessions are. I'm able to get the perspective of people who don't breathe underwater to explain to me how important breathing underwater is.

**Lisa Larter (28:04):**

Yeah. I think that there's an expression, and I'm going to botch it, but Anna Levesque blogged about this. She's part of The Strategy Lab as well. And it's like there's two fish swimming along in the water and an older fish goes by and says, "Oh, you're breathing like a fish in water," or something, and the little fish says, "What's breathing?" It's like sometimes you don't know what you don't know, and I think that's why... That's what I love about Thought Readers is, and I guess it applies to The Strategy Lab too, which is insights, is really being able to learn and grow and benefit from the insights that other people have. When I'm reading a book, I'm always thinking that I'm masterminding with the author because as I read their words and their methodologies and their IP, it's triggering ideas for me, and those ideas for me wouldn't have come about if I hadn't been reading the words that they wrote. And so, it's so powerful to think and discuss things with other like-minded people.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (29:12):**

I agree. The way I think you should look at this community is that being in it doesn't automatically make you successful. It doesn't automatically stack the odds in your favor. Being a part of it and actively contributing and trying to learn is a catalyst for your success. It allows you to stack those odds. It's an accelerant.

### **Lisa Larter (29:35):**

Yeah, I agree. I agree. And I think that it also creates a safe space for you to... When we look at member-led learning and ask me anything sessions, I think it creates a safe space for members to even test things out with a control group and get feedback before they go to market. I think that when you're doing member-led training, if you want to test a concept before you do a webinar, before you create a program that people are going to pay for, you would get lots of valuable feedback from the community that you're in, which I think is another added bonus.

### **Lisa Larter (30:15):**

We've talked a lot about The Strategy Lab, and really, the reason that I wanted to talk to you about The Strategy Lab is twofold, maybe threefold. So, one, our next planning sprint is December 6th, and so anyone who's interested in learning more about The Strategy Lab should go to [lisalarter.com/thelab](https://lisalarter.com/thelab) to get on the wait list to learn more about The Strategy Lab. Because as of now, we only have founding members and this will be the first time that we've opened the doors up to other people to join the lab, so I really wanted to talk a little bit about it. But I also, as we are talking about money and metrics and measurements of success, want to make sure that people don't lose sight of the fact that community and connection is a driver for results. And if you are operating your business in isolation, you're doing yourself a disservice. You need to meet and interact with other people in order to expand your network.

### **Lisa Larter (31:15):**

And as a business owner, you have to become well-rounded in business. It's not enough to be a subject matter expert on what you know; you need to keep learning. And the reason you want to keep learning is because the more you know, the more value you can provide to your clients, but the more you know, the more confident you become about things, too. I think that we change as human beings when we are exposed to new ideas and we learn different things because we can synthesize that information and contextualize it in different areas of our business, and in the absence of that learning, we're actually doing a disservice to ourselves.

### **Lisa Larter (32:00):**

And then the third reason that I wanted to have Nabil on is I actually think that the best way to learn whether a program is, or a coach or anything, is good for you is to ask somebody else what the experience has been like for them. If you look at restaurants as an example, what do you do when you go to a new city and you want to go out for Indian food, you Google, "Best Indian food," and then you read the reviews on Google or on Yelp and you make a decision based on the experiences that other people have had. And so, I can tell you, The Strategy Lab is the best thing since sliced bread, but I'm biased. Whereas, Nabil is a member of that community, and so I'm hoping that what he is sharing gives you a perspective on the types of communities that are available.

### **Lisa Larter (32:53):**

The way that I see the online space right now is there's a lot of people doing DIY learning, where you can buy a program and you get modules dripped to you and you learn in isolation. There's a lot of people that are doing live learning, so get on Zoom, if you haven't had enough Zoom every week and learn something for a period of time. And then there's a lot of people that are doing communities, and you join this community and you're part of a network, and there's the odd thing that gets thrown in there but it's really community centric. There's not as many people doing the learning, the strategy, the community, and the member-led co-creation, and so I really do think that The Strategy Lab is different in that respect.

### **Lisa Larter (33:41):**

But I'm curious, Nabil, what do you think the value is in being part of The Strategy Lab? Because you work with me privately so you really don't have to be part of The Strategy Lab. And then my second follow up to that question is, what would you tell someone who is considering investing in their growth who wants to be part of a community like The Strategy Lab? What should they be thinking about as they choose whether it's The Strategy Lab or it's Joe's Coffee Shop, or whatever it is in the online space, what would you suggest they consider?

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (34:23):**

Those are some excellent questions. Let's see if I can break them down and remember them so that I can answer. I think the first one was why do I like The Strategy Lab?

**Lisa Larter (34:34):**

Yeah. And what is the value of being part of that community for you?

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (34:38):**

Absolutely. so-

**Lisa Larter (34:38):**

Because you can shortcut the answers because you work with me privately.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (34:44):**

You're right. I can just go to you.

**Lisa Larter (34:45):**

So, you don't need a Learning Lab on anything. You can go direct to me. And so, you have direct access to my business advisement at any time on any topic, but you and your wife both regularly show up for every planning sprint and every Learning Lab. So, there's got to be value there or you wouldn't keep showing up for those things, too.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (35:13):**

100%. There is a tremendous amount of value there, and I find it's usually around how structured it is and the fact that there is a cadence to it and it is locked into my calendar. It is not me-led, it is led for me in a way that I've agreed to. If I don't show up, I'm saying no to the person that I want to become, to the business that I want to grow every single time. So, I'm saying yes every time so that I could show up and actually grow my business and learn. And the alternate value, since I privately coach with you, is that not only do I get your perspectives when we privately coach and you personalize the information for us, in the lab, I get to learn more generic things that other people find useful that I may not have valued because of my background. Right?

### **Nabil Ould-Brahim (36:14):**

I know a lot about a lot of technical things, I know a decent amount about business things, but there's always something that I don't know, and there's always something that I don't know and something super basic that I thought I knew. And so, rerunning that in my head and refreshing my mind on those topics, really awakens creativity in my business and unlocks potential growth that is completely hidden to me that could be there. And I get to be with other like-minded people who feel very similarly about their business, who want to succeed and want everybody else within the community to succeed. It's super warm and friendly. There's no one that's trying to beat you over something else. The competition, if there is any, is usually on-

### **Lisa Larter (37:04):**

There isn't.

### **Nabil Ould-Brahim (37:05):**

... individuals themselves to be better, not against each other. And so, it's a great space to be in and that's why I love it. And that's why it adds a different dimension and value to my life and my business than just exclusively private coaching with you.

### **Lisa Larter (37:23):**

All right. And so, the last part of that question was what would you tell someone who is looking to invest in their growth about what they should consider in joining a community like The Strategy Lab? So, let me preface... This is not a sales pitch for The Strategy Lab. It is what do you think that people should be considering before they invest in any type of community and/or learning that is group-centric like this?

### **Nabil Ould-Brahim (37:58):**

I think the first things you should consider, you're most likely a business owner of some kind, entrepreneur, solopreneur, really doesn't matter the scale of your business, and you've got to look at what you're feeling and what your pain points and frustrations are. You're most likely in a position where you've had some success, you know that you can keep this going the same way for a long time, but it requires a lot of work from you. Some days you're like, "Do I even bother? Why do I even have a business? I could just switch and become employed." And so, there's a lot of these feelings that

you can have, a lot of you're just working nonstop and you're not really seeing where it's going to take you, and you don't spend the time to plan.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (38:48):**

If you look back at your last two, three years, how much of your growth has been meaningful, planned, and strategic, and very enjoyable for you to do? And so, if the answers to those are, "No, I haven't really thought about it. I don't know where I'm going. I don't think I'm learning enough about stuff. I'm lacking the creativity. I'm lacking the personalization on that stuff," and you're looking at investing in your learning, there's plenty of different areas that you can invest in. And I would suggest The Strategy Lab, because it's a community where you're no longer going to feel isolated. Everybody has the same feelings that you're going to have at some point. It's as if you've cloned yourselves in multiple different realities and you're in the same group trying to grow your business.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (39:45):**

The second aspect of it is that every single month, you're learning. Even if the topic is something that you already know, you're going to learn something about it that you didn't know before. It just happens. Or rehashing it will trigger something new and creative in your business. And then the last component is the planning gives you that cadence that I talked about that really gets you to... It really gets you to strategically and intentionally plan the growth of your business and allows you to show up.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (40:19):**

And then the thing that I think encompasses all of that and really brings it all in together is the fact that Lisa Larter is the one that's leading this, and if you're on this podcast and you don't know her enough, she's like a phenomenal business strategist. I could go up to the top of Mount Everest and scream as loud as I can and it still wouldn't be enough as to how talented she is when it comes to that. And when you're in this community and you're asking questions, she not only will help you understand the topic, but she will personalize it to you and your business with the current context that you're facing. It's not generic advice. It's not like joining on a webinar and asking a question and the person just takes your question and turns it into the most generic thing that makes as many people happy as possible. It's very direct, it's very pointed, and it's very, very valuable to you. Even when other people

ask those questions, you get value from the way that Lisa strategizes the answer for their business.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (41:24):**

And so, that's what I find brings the whole thing together. And you have some drive and some say in it. If you want something, you can ask for it, someone will provide it. That's why I think it's valuable, and that's why if you're feeling like that, if you're feeling like you're drifting in your business, this is a no-brainer decision in my opinion. Just take a look at it. Based on what I said, if I were you, not buying it would be saying yes to what you've been doing for the last little bit and no to the future business that you want to have.

**Lisa Larter (42:00):**

I love that expression. Saying no to the future desires you have for yourself professionally and for your business. And thank you for the very kind words. I appreciate you saying that. I'm blushing on camera, so thank you for that. There was one other thing that you said that I think is really important. It's really easy to drift as an entrepreneur because you don't have a boss. And so, I always joke that every entrepreneur really needs a boss, and that's why I think my nickname is Bossy Pants because I tend to boss people around a little bit when I care about them and I want them to do well.

**Lisa Larter (42:34):**

But you talked about the fact that you take the programming from The Strategy Lab and you put it in your calendar and you set those appointments up and you then show up for those appointments. I think that regardless of what program anyone invests in, whether it's a Strategy Lab or something else, you have to show up to grow up. So, if you don't show up, you're not going to get the growth that you want in your business. You're going to continue to get what you get right now. I know entrepreneurs that have worked with me who have more than 10X the size of their business, have even sold their business, and then I know other entrepreneurs that are still at the same level pretty much they were five or 10 years ago because they haven't chosen to invest in themselves, they haven't chosen to show up in order to grow up to the level that they really aspire to be at.

### **Lisa Larter (43:41):**

I think that next year is going to be a pivotal year for many business owners. I think that small business owners are naive if they don't think that everything that's going on with inflation and supply chain and the world economy isn't going to have an impact on their business. And so, I think being astute about business is more important today than it's ever been if you want your business to survive. You can't afford to continue to do things the way you've always done it. You've got to challenge yourself to think differently and do differently if you want to get better and different results. Otherwise, you're probably going to start to see a decline in your results if you haven't already seen that happen.

### **Lisa Larter (44:25):**

I know there are people out there that are already seeing their sales are not as strong as they once were, they're having a harder time hiring, they're having a harder time retaining customers, and they're having a harder time managing the profitability of their business. And I think that when people are experiencing those things, it's because they don't understand the financial aspect of their business, they don't understand how to price for profit, which is another one of my favorite labs in The Strategy Lab, and the lack of knowledge of those things actually hinders them from the growth that they would like to have.

### **Nabil Ould-Brahim (45:00):**

I completely agree. I think if you look at the landscape of the most successful entrepreneurs, not just the crazy billionaires that you see out there, but just the common day successful business owners that you see around, they all have knowledge and learnings that they've had that looks like a T. And it's the super, super broad T. The vertical a part of the T is what they're technically good at, whether that's baking cakes or making sandwiches or something, they're really, really, really deep in that and they're really, really successful at that. But that in itself isn't going to make a business. You need to have the top part of the T, and you want that as broad as possible, go as far out as possible. Learn as much at a high level of everything and then a little bit into like the details to make sure that you know what's going on. And having that picture of knowledge is a really challenging thing to do.

### **Nabil Ould-Brahim (46:11):**

Usually in school and stuff we talk about like, "Let's make sure you're well-rounded and you're really, really good at that." I hated that when I was in university. I loved just my computer science program, that's what I really, really liked, that's all I wanted to do. I didn't want to take anything else. I wanted to have the deepest T possible and the narrowest T imaginable. And when I came out of the technical world, I realized how unlearned I was. I didn't know an absurd amount of stuff that is relatively basic things that you need to know. I didn't even have a clue that I didn't know them.

### **Nabil Ould-Brahim (46:55):**

And so, it's always vital that you invest in your own learning. And even when you look at the most successful people out there, like there's a Bill Gates documentary on Netflix, and he is continually learning every single year. Whenever he has an important topic, he flies out to his cabin, grabs a stack of 10 books, and then devours every single one of those 10 books. So, be like Bill Gates. You need to learn. You need to be able to consume information and filter that out and figure out what's important, valuable to your business, so that you can leverage it to grow.

### **Lisa Larter (47:33):**

Yeah, I agree. I always tell people don't judge me because I read Fox News. I also read CNN and the Wall Street Journal because I want perspectives from all different places in order to be able to form my own opinion and understand what's going on in the world. I think you're right, and I think a lot of times you don't know what you don't know until you know. And your success, I believe, is dependent on your willingness to learn and expose yourself to new things and to build and grow your community. So, if you take anything away from this session, I want you to remember that you can stack luck on your side and you can put growth odds in your favor by design if you're willing to show up and you're willing to connect and you're willing to do the things that are proven practices to build a business.

### **Lisa Larter (48:27):**

Nabil, thank you for being here with me today. I really, really enjoyed it. If you want to learn more about Nabil, him and his lovely wife Michelle Weger own Venture Creative Collective. You can find venture Creative Collective

online. We will have a link to their website in the show notes, which, ooh, you're getting an inbound link for SEO. That's a great thing.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (48:49):**

Nice.

**Lisa Larter (48:50):**

Sorry. We all love a little bit of SEO juice. So, thank you for your time, Nabil, and for your contribution. It was great having this conversation with you.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (48:59):**

Thank you so much for having me, Lisa. It was an absolute pleasure. And if anyone who's listening in is going to join Thought Readers, please don't hesitate to come say hello in the community and I'd be more than delighted to get to know you and meet you.

**Lisa Larter (49:13):**

Or The Strategy Lab.

**Nabil Ould-Brahim (49:14):**

Yes.

**Lisa Larter (49:15):**

That too. He's everywhere, guys. Everywhere. Just ask me, "Where's Nabil?" and I'll point you to the different places you can find him. Thanks everyone for listening. Have a wonderful rest of your day. And if you want to learn more about The Strategy Lab, go to [Lisalarter.com/thelab](https://lisalarter.com/thelab). Talk to you next week. Bye for now.

**Lisa Larter (49:35):**

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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From Blackberry to QNX to Concept project with VW and Maserati, Nabil has worked with some of the biggest companies in the world. He leverages the same big-picture thinking and deep technical knowledge that made him so successful in the corporate world to create custom automation systems for small to medium-sized businesses and start-ups.

