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So I had somebody ask me recently what I would do if I had to start all over again with my business what would I do how would I start a business from scratch today? And that's a pretty hard question to answer because businesses evolve. Unless you're buying like a McDonald's franchise or something where you get a business in a box, there's no one size fits all solution to how would you start over today? When people ask me what would you do today, I feel like they're asking for a checklist of sorts, like a step by step plan to follow that would guarantee their success.

And I can't give that to you because like I said, business has evolved we change, we pivot, we try new things, we pay attention to what worked and what didn't work, and we eliminate the things that aren't going our way. So if I tried to give you a checklist, it wouldn't work for you because you are unique. Your experiences in the world are different than mine, your expertise is different than mine, and your abilities are different than mine.

So instead of a checklist to follow, what I would like to give you today is more of a recipe. It's something that I hope you'll feel free to change up to meet your own needs, right you can, you know, substitute cheddar cheese for Gouda if that's what you have on hand, or swap out the white wine for vegetable stock if you don't like white wine. That's really the way that business advice works.

It's more of a recipe than a checklist to follow because at the end of the day, it's your meal and your business, and you get to create it the way that it serves you best. This is episode one thirty four of the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, and today I'm going to tell you what I would do if I were starting a Business Today. And then I'll give you some pointers for taking that checklist, that recipe and turning it into something that works for you too.

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Hey, it's Cindy, and thank you for spending a few minutes of your day with me.

You'll find the show notes and the recommended resources for this episode at TinyCourseEmpire.com/134. If you're new to the show, be sure to hit the subscribe button new episodes drop every Monday morning. And next week, I'm going to tell you how I planned a year's worth of content with nothing but a stack of index cards and a Google Calendar.

But that is next week. This week is all about starting from scratch, how I would do it, and what I recommend if that's where you're at today. Before I get into what I would do, I want to tell you more about what I did wrong. It's my hope that I can prevent you from having to learn the hard lessons that I learned along the way maybe we can shortcut that learning curve for you just a little bit by sharing with you what really did not work for me in the beginning.

The first thing that did not work for me was inconsistent action and if you have been listening to hearing me or reading my advice for any length of time, then you

know that I pound on that consistency drum frequently. That's because it matters. And I learned this the hard way in the beginning of my business. I was the queen of inconsistency i would email my list once or maybe twice and then not email them again for four months.

I would make a blog post. I would make 6 blog posts and then not a single blog post for a year or 18 months. It was really random, really inconsistent and that is no way to grow a business. Consistent action matters more than the most brilliant marketing plan. If you show up consistently, you will grow an audience, and you will grow an audience faster than you would if you had the most brilliant but inconsistent marketing plan. The other side of that consistency coin, the way I tried to make up for it, was by then taking massive action instead so I wouldn't email my list for months and then I would decide I'm going to email my list every single day.

And that's a bit like taking a couch potato like myself and deciding that I'm going to run a marathon next month. It's a good goal, but it doesn't work. It's too much there's too much action involved and it is not sustainable. So don't go too far to the other extreme either like I used to do, and try to do everything all at once just aim for that consistent action. The second thing that I did that was a huge mistake was letting my marketing fall by the wayside because I had a full client roster.

And this was at a time when I was, I was a virtual assistant, I was a freelancer, so my income depended on doing work for other people. And if you've ever been a freelancer, if you've ever been a virtual assistant, then you will know that when your client roster is full, the last thing you have time for, the last thing you want to focus on is marketing to find new clients that you don't have room for. So it's a balancing act and I would not prioritize marketing promoting my business because I already had a full client roster well, then what happens is you lose a client a client decides to go a different direction, they close their business, whatever you have a big gaping hole in your schedule and no marketing to fill it, no prospects to fill that space in your calendar.

So failing to market just because I already had a full client roster was a huge mistake that I made in the beginning that I wouldn't make again. And hopefully you won't make that mistake either. The third mistake that I made was failing to recognize my own skills. I told myself frequently that whatever it was that I knew,

these things that came so easily to me about marketing and technology, these were skills that everybody had nobody needed to hear this from me, and that was 100 % not true. So failing to recognize my own skills, my own expertise, my own experience as being valuable to someone else was a huge mistake that I made early on in my business.

And hopefully you are not making that same mistake. So what would I do now? Well, here's the recipe. I would create a consistent content schedule and you knew that was coming, right? Create content consistently, at least weekly, hopefully more, but make that commitment to be publishing content on a regular basis. This is what grows your community this is what attracts your audience this is what shows off the expertise and the experience that you have and what tells people, hey, you are a person that should be listened to you are a person who can solve the problem that your ideal audience is facing.

It is your content that does that for you. So publishing content consistently is the number one thing that I would recommend that you do. And along with that, I want you to be brave enough to speak your mind, to say things that might be contrary to what other people in your market are saying, to what your competitors are saying. So for example, I am the one who is going to speak up and say I don't like AI for content creation. I don't like it. I've talked about it before. I don't use it.

I don't think it has a place in content marketing. Now, I'm perfectly happy for somebody else to use it if that's what they want to do but that is not what I'm ever going to teach because I don't like it. So I am OK with standing up and saying this is not a tool that I use. The same thing for social media. This is not a tool that I use i'm never going to teach you to use social media because I don't use it i don't like it.

So being able to stand up for what I believe is right, what works for me, takes a lot of bravery and it's going to take a lot of bravery for you to do it as well. But that is how you create stand out content in your niche. The second thing I would do if I were starting over from scratch today is I would prioritize list building. I've told the story before you guys are probably sick of hearing it about how I paid for a list platform. It was a Weber back in the day.

I paid for a Weber for years and years and years and I had less than 200 people on my list that whole time and I almost never emailed them. But I knew that I needed to have an email list i knew how important it was. I just didn't prioritize it. So if I were starting over today, I would make list building my number one priority. My email list is how I promote my products it is how I build a community it is how I build that audience up that I can then promote my content to, that I can promote my products to my membership, my courses, my coaching.

All of that comes in through my email list and if I was not prioritizing list building, I would have a lot fewer people in my community to speak to. So putting the priority on list building would be the second thing that I would do right after content creation and that means that the call to action for all of that content that I am creating should go to my list. That's how I would how I would prioritize it. The third thing that I would do is focus all of my efforts on one product or service where I had real expertise and experience to share. I come across people all the time who want to start 2 businesses or three businesses or five businesses all at once, and they say yes, but I have all of these passions i'm excited about all of these things and that is fantastic.

I am happy that you have all of these things that really light you up, but when you try to focus on more than one thing at a time, what you're doing is spreading yourself really thin and not giving the best of yourself to anyone project. So if I were starting over today, and if you are starting right now, I would highly recommend that you start with one thing. Give it everything you've got.

Go all in on that one thing and make it the very best that you can make it. Resist the urge to add more. It only dilutes your message. So how can you take this recipe and make it your own? Well, the first thing you're going to want to do is choose the right content channel. I have an earlier podcast episode where I talk about choosing content channels i will link to that in the show notes for you if you want to go listen to that. But choose the channel that is right for you and that is right for your audience and go all in.

Create content on a consistent basis on that Channel. Now that might be podcasting, it might be YouTube, it might be on a sub stack or a Medium account, or in LinkedIn or on a blog that you own. It doesn't matter but pick one and be

consistent on that Channel. Resist the urge to add more channels until you really get that Channel dialed in, until you are really doing a great job and you have maximized and optimized that Channel. Then you can add more things in so pick a channel, whatever one works best for you and for your audience, and go all in on that.

For list building, you're going to want to create a top quality lead magnet that attracts your audience and that makes them say, oh, I get all of this for just the cost of an email address. I am in, right? And then you want to make sure that the call to action for all of your content is to download that resource, grab that resource, and that resource can be a PDF it can be an E course, it can be, you know, a tiny, tiny video course it can be even a series of blog posts that you put together in an E book don't overthink it, Just make it valuable for your ideal customer.

And when it comes to creating resources for that ideal customer, here's how you can make sure you're doing a fantastic job at that. Make it your goal to learn more from your customers than they learn from you, and here's what I mean by that. Make it your goal to always know what they are struggling with, to know the words that they are using to describe the problems that they are having. To know what it costs them to not solve the problem that you are solving.

When you know that, when you are so in tuned with your audience and your community that you can tell them what it is they are struggling with, what problems they are facing and what it's costing them. That's when you have become a community leader who is the expert in your niche. Two more things that are going to help along the way number one keep it simple we've kind of touched on this, right i've talked about doing one thing, having one content channel, committing to your goal. But when I say keep it simple, I mean you don't need a big fancy course platform. You do not need trip wires and five step funnels.

You do not need Hollywood level video editing. Keep it simple. Just go out there, create your content, create the best programs, the best courses, the best products, the best coaching that you are capable of creating. You can always improve upon it later. But you don't need to start at the platinum level, right you don't need to start at the top we all start at the bottom, and we all start by keeping it very, very simple.

It's a lot less stressful and it is a lot easier to manage. I also want to recommend that you put a lot of emphasis on mindset this is probably one of my biggest regrets in business is that I didn't take mindset seriously until just in the last few years and it has made a huge difference not only in my business but in my life. So I would encourage you to take mindset seriously if you don't already. And that means being mindful of the stories that you are telling yourself. For one thing, I hear so many people who want to come to me and say, oh, I just hate technology or oh, I just don't, I don't have those skills.

And that is killing your business. Don't say those things to yourself. What you are doing is gay Hendrix from from The Big Leap would say you are arguing for your limitations. Don't argue for your own limitations. Carol Dweck in her book Mindset talks about the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. And by saying I'm not good at technology or I hate technology, you are embracing a fixed mindset you are declaring to yourself that this is just the way it is and it will never change. And when you do that, you're pretty much guaranteeing it will never change.

So don't say those things to yourself. Instead, look for ways to embrace that growth mindset i'm going to link to both Carol Carol Dweck's book and Gay Hendrix's book below. Check both of those out. I highly, highly recommend them both. Remember too, that abundance is a thing. A lot of times we want to think that, oh, there's so much competition, there's so many other people doing this thing that I want to do that there's just no room for me in there, right there's too, it's too saturated the market is too saturated.

I heard James Clear once say that yes, the market might be saturated, but Even so, there is always room for quality and that is 100 % true. I've also said before that if there is competition, that's not a bad thing that's a good thing that proves that there is a market for what you want to do. If you are out there swimming in an empty ocean where there is no competition, that's probably because there's no market for what you want to sell. So look for your competitors that's a good sign it is a sign that people are purchasing what it is you want to create and look for ways that you can actually work with your competitors.

I think that's a really valuable skill to have as well i'm probably going to talk about that in a later video there's not not really room for that in this video, but I want you to maybe switch up how you think about your competition if you think that having competitors is not a good thing, and finally start noticing evidence of your own success. Our brains are wired to notice negativity we all have a negativity bias we all see the bad things we remember the bad things more than we see and remember the good things.

But you can change that you can begin to practice seeing the evidence of your success instead of the evidence of your failure. Make it a habit to notice those things that point to you going in the right direction the emails that you get from someone who you helped, or the sale that came to you out of the blue, or the new subscribers on a brand new YouTube channel that you haven't even promoted yet. That is all evidence that you are going in the right direction and you want to make sure that you are looking for that and noticing that when it happens it's important. Here's one more thing for you to keep in mind.

Like I said in the beginning, your business will evolve. What you create today will not look the same in a year or in two years or in five years it will be completely different. Rather than trying to build your dream business from the start right now and trying to make it look like some grand vision that you have. Instead, remember that you are going to keep building as you go so we all start from nothing, right we all start at the ground floor and we build up as we go. Your business doesn't have to look today like what it's going to look like in five years.

Be open to the possibility of change. Look for places to improve. Look for places to maybe even pivot. That's how businesses evolve. If you keep those core pieces in place, the consistent content marketing, the email list building and focusing on the quality of the products and the services and the courses that you create, then the rest will sort itself out as you go. Now it's your turn. Drop me a comment below at TinyCourseEmpire.com/134 and tell me what specific steps you are going to take to build your business starting from right now. I'd love to hear your plans, so feel free to share them with me if you like.

And could you do me a favor if you enjoyed this episode, would you share it with a friend? That is the best way to help the channel grow and to keep these new videos

rolling out every single week. That's it for me today i will be back next week to show you how I use index cards and my Google Calendar to plan out an entire year's worth of content. Have a terrific rest of your day and I will see you next time.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

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systems that lead to
BIG RESULTS
even if you're brand new
to online business.**

START TODAY

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