

**Jennifer Navarrete:** Welcome to the show that shares insights into how you can Build Your Business Once with hosts Sherry Lowry, and Jennifer Navarrete.

Thank you for joining us today, my name is Jenifer Navarrete, and Sherry Lowry is bringing us her 20-plus years of experience in how to Build Your Business Once.

Now, today we are talking about Green-Blocking Your Calendar, and Clients and projects for profit. I have to say, Sherry, when you first sent that title over to me I was like what is Green-Blocking??? I maybe think I know what that is, but I am ready to type my fingers to the bone because I know you are going to be sharing with us a lot of great tips.

**Sherry Lowry:** I adopted Green-Blocking as a term when I got into organic gardening, and organic food, and began to realize I was building nutritional blocks completely differently than I had ever thought of as such before. It does not really have to do with calories, is has to do with what within the calorie actually builds bone, muscle, and sinew.

I guess what you call “grit” is what we are building, like intestinal fortitude and commitment, those type of things for us to bring to our business. Often eventually we may share with Clients however we do that. It has a lot to do with how we hold to our standards, and what standards we help them set for themselves. These are elements that will hold true for them for themselves.

What this is about and what this came out of is I did a whole series for quite a long time called Buffing Your Business – as in polishing it up. It was a business development and expansion project for established Business Coaches, or established Business Owners who were ready to get to the “green, and the desert, and the flower” part of their business. They had done the hard work, and I discovered Todd Duncan’s *Law of the Broom* and *Law of the Hour Glass* concepts. Todd Duncan is somewhat of a business expert in sales, but at some point he was deeply struck with the value and power of relationship. That was when he moved from tactical sales, a pain-based kind of sale to a relational type of business building to where you are a resource to a Client no matter what. It did not always end in a sale, but no matter what, it ended in a buffing, an enriching, an expansion of the relationship to the point that Todd Duncan had become a go-to person for his entire industry, not just within his one business.

He and his work were inspirations for me more than a model, so I took some of the ideas I found there, and turned them into green-blocking for a different type of owner. So, one purpose was there was more left to them, my Client “owners” at the end of their day than what they had just put into their business.

It is little based on a law of nature and how we put more back into the soil than we take out with each harvest, and at some point we have to let the soil rest. So that is where the green-blocking idea comes into play.

**JN:** When you say some times you need to let the soil rest, which is a farming and biblical principal right, not like something brand new, time-tested, and true over the course of mankind that there is a time to rest.

Do you think those things we call Sabbaticals are those kind of times when folks think thanes something that only certain type of people get to do, but is something we should all be doing in order to regenerate and refresh our personal soil?

**SL:** Yes, I do think that, and retreats are an example, one of the things we will address before we get through with our series is the occurrence of extra weekends just for us. With our Roman calendar, we have more than just four weekends every month. We will end up with between three and four extra weekends a year, every year, if we look at our calendar from that perspective. I will do a session on how you get time for yourself. The way I get to this, and this calendar-reality, gave me the lead-in to begin to close my office down at 1:00 every Friday. Then I not open it up again officially, publicly, ‘til noon on Monday, every Monday. So, I had half-a-day on Friday to basically be off or to have free time to re-organize, re-charge, or for learning purposes or relationship purposes. Then I also kept Monday mornings free (meaning) before I started my more public work at 1:00 PM on Monday, or sometimes noon. That kept me from having to get up at 5:30 in the morning instead and doing then worked out. (This does not mean I did not “work” on Monday mornings, I just did not work directly with Clients or be “public” but focused on what prepared me in advance for my new week.)

I am in alignment with you, Jennifer, It is the same basic principle – also giving your business a chance to rest when it needs to coast a bit; to work with the types of Clients in mind who are with you though all of this, but you are not

working the whole time that you are with them. You are celebrating part of that time, kind of rejoicing renewing together, and planning for the future together rather than doing, doing all of the time.

It is kind of contagious, and they began to take that style into their business operation too, not just in the way they and I were interacting there.

So part of Duncan's basic concepts, The Law of the Hourglass, is an underlying operational principle and within it, you "manage your moves or actions," not time. I think you and I do that without realizing we are doing it when we are working more strategically. In accompaniment with The Law of the Hourglass is The Law of the Broom. That is committing to build your business up, first clean it up.

So we can build our business, but some times it sprawls, or kind of over-spills into other things or gets into territories that we *can* venture in, we *can* do business in, but they are not really our sweet spots.

What Todd Duncan's primary emphasis is if you will pay attention to The Law of the Hourglass and adopt that, then managing your moves and actions of your activities, not your time, that will begin to take care of itself. It will automatically give you the opportunity to apply The Law of the Broom.

Stop, take inventory, reflect, and then think more consciously and if you are building your business UP, it is going to be more and more contained and vertical. It then has a chance to be getting more refined, and it is also getting deeper in foundation. First to do that you need to clean it up, you need to get rid of the extra stuff, or sideline stuff.

Jennifer, you and I had a conversation at one point when people would advise you to focus, focus, and pull in. You don't need to do that if you are very specific about how and where to build it up, and you pick the territories.

**JN:** That is the sweet spot for me. It was the three things I can provide that give me great joy, excellent service, and be in that zone where I can shine and help my Clients shine. There are then the things I can do because I can do lots of things, but those are not my sweet spots that I enjoy.

You are right, you go vertical, and for me there are three things I want to focus in, and I am hyper-focused in. on what those three things are and makes a big

difference in the way my business grows. That seeds and paves the way for the kinds of Clients I am getting because I am very focused.

**SL:** One of the ways to get specific on this that may help is I will give you **four main points** that are demonstrated within the green-time blocking process. **First** is what we just referenced, time is not manageable, things happen, interruptions, we are not in charge of a lot of that. We can say we work by the hour or the clock, but in reality **it is working us**.

The **Second** point, what you can really manage is your actions, choices, decisions. We have spent a good bit of this month talking about choices and conscious decisions, thoughtful decisions, useful decisions you don't need to regret.

The **Third** is how you plan your time can have a positive result on trust and relationship building. When you are able to be true to your work, when you are able to spend the kind of time together and create the opportunity to exchange dependably, and are on-call, and able to be accessible because you are not trying to wedge 60 things into your calendar in one day, you begin to have a positive result on others, including your Clients. The foundation for trust is automatically being put down and your relationship building is beginning to start.

The **Fourth** is the finance around this. You actually make more money and spend less time and have less stress doing what you are naturally good at and what continues to renew and grow you. A lot of us are good at what also wears us out, and so that is when we begin to pay attention to body and begin to get signals. We learn what is ours to do a lot of VS what is ours to do occasionally.

Jennifer, you and I have discussed this a number of times. There is some pre-qualifying that goes into that. Before I get into that I want to stop here and give you and opportunity for questions.

**JN:** We covered this in some pieces and parts, but you are bringing it all together with this concept of **Green-Blocking**, because sometimes when you introduce a new concept, new terminology, it is a lot for a mind to handle. But because of some of the things we have already spread breadcrumbs earlier, it makes it an easier concept to understand.

**SL:** That is what I hope, there is also a handout so the things I am speaking to today will have a one-pager in archives for people to download.

So this became a Four-Step Client management process developed over time to go with this simply through observing how my business developed and evolved. We get to a nice step forward then upward, when before it was mainly sprawling and spreading out. This is sometimes called Project Creep, or Project Crawl. In my case it was the type of Clients, the levels of business stages and also the “pace” of the various Clients. Over time I began to re-educate myself about who I was best to work with at least at that point in time. As that particular business stage changed, I would need to make little adjustments all along the way.

In the Four-Step Client Management Process, which I just named that!, we have to make determinations about our Client base as to where each particular Client might be based in their stage of business, their mindset, and how that fits into what our particular business stage together is.

On Level One if the Client was lower profit for me, for example, and I began to notice that particular Client, or the project or both, began to be high maintenance. In my case, that might have been they weren't ready to do the work yet for other reasons. They came in saying they wanted to do it, or were not getting to it most of the time, or they were not that organized when they came to me each time. That was after I had given them a way to get prepared, and we had talked about that and I had met with them and we talked on the phone various times.

Ultimately, it came to me that I was not doing a good service keeping that Client in my Client base. I either needed to bridge them to resources that could work with them where they were, or join them where they were in their business stage, or suggest more training for them of a different type, or something else. (Key: I needed to ask more of myself before I asked more of the Client.)

That was when I had to have a conversation with that Client about literally how it could be possible for them, in my view, for us to step up together and move to a new way of being together, or I could literally set some sort of goals for our relationship itself and give them an opportunity to accept the challenge to step up to those with me, with my support or not. Or, to refer them to something else.

Sometimes it was a relief for both of us; sometimes it did not go well because they wanted to continue the work. But, the majority of the time, they began to get aware they weren't actually doing what they said themselves they wanted to do.

That was the Level One Client, Level Four is the top, and that what we are trying to have the most of in our Client base when we can.

Level Two is high-profit. This may be a Client who is paying a good fee on-time, regularly, no complaint and can afford to do that. BUT, for me, they had begun to become a high maintenance Client or high maintenance project. That is where their scope and spread you don't expect some times changes.

In my case it was my responsibility to re-educate them in what would be more suitable ways for me to be bringing myself to them. I also had to be very truthful if I wanted to do this particular piece of work in the way they wanted to do it. That was a truth talk for me I always had to have first **with myself**.

In every case from Level One through Level Four, I always have to ask more of myself and change what I can of myself first before I ask the Client to begin to consider that.

On the Level Two, after the re-education, after making the changes myself, I would invite them to the next level for both of us, and almost always they would accept the challenge and be excited about it. They weren't really wanting to do the work and were capable of doing the work, they just did not expect that much of themselves, or maybe they didn't think they had the capability but I saw they had the capability, and I had to point the way for that.

At Level Three, these are the ones that become longer-term Clients, and sometimes **Forever** kinds of Clients, too. They may be lower profit in terms of the math, but they are very low maintenance Clients that are pleasures to meet with on a regular basis.

There is always new learning for both of us. AND their pace may be different than my pace as I have a faster pace than a lot of my Clients, so I have to manage that on things when it is fine for them to take a little longer to get accomplished for themselves than I see them being capable of. That's their choice though, not mine.

Level Three is the one that has the high potential to become a stable part of the foundation of your on-going, long-term relationship type Client.

There is still interesting growth mutually, for you as for the Client, and on a repeat basis.

On Level Four, these are higher profit ones, also really easy to work with and a pleasure to work with. We have a strong working relationship, ideally, there is some degree of new learning for both of us on a repeat basis, and like with the people as well at Level Three, I get to do some degree of experimentation trying things out. They are almost interested in new things I am also interested in as well. A lot of times they bring things to me they are trying to explore and want a co-journeyer and so we may be moving into things that are unexpected, very fresh, new trends or something like that together. That happens both for Level Three and Level Four Clients.

In some cases, that is a long-term Client or project you periodically will do one piece of a project and they implement a lot of it. Then they may want a break, then come back. Those are where you are providing oversight with them at their specific request.

So, Jennifer, does that make sense you would understand that your Client base has an order and structure to it to look at it from this perspective?

**JN:** It does, the Level Four Clients are adventures. They have this adventurous spirit, and are willing to try if it is me approaching them, or some times they come to me and say, "Hey, I heard about this, how do you think this would work in my business?" Allowing them to go digging in some things I have not really heard about, soundboard about does this apply to your business, does it not, should we think about what we can do in the future? Let's put this on the bookshelf or let's work towards it.

But those kinds of Clients are a lot of fun. I have had Clients at every level. I have not thought of them in all four levels. I have had the most Clients at Level One. Those are the most challenging, like as much as we all have good intentions of being on the same playing field, or staying focused in goals, for whatever reason you feel you state really clearly, this is the goal, they kind of wander off. They wander off and lose focus. It seems like you spend a lot of time reminding them

through the Mindmap, and through my Key Performance Indicator, all the things we have in-place to stay on-track, they are wandering. I feel that is such a waste of time. Granted they are paying for that time, but it does not feel fruitful.

I inevitably wind up graduating those Clients a little early, letting them know I may not be the best fit for them at this stage, and referring them, which – I know we will be talking about in a future show.

**SL:** Just to wrap this up, my concept of Green-Blocking includes scheduling your priorities rather than prioritizing your schedule. That is paying attention to first things first idea, also pre-defining your green activities that are necessary for your business to excel. What are you ready for more of, what type of Client and Client project will be most growthful and most challenging now? Maybe you are one you are a little afraid of and who you are going to be adventuring and discovering as you go. This has to be ok for you and the Client as well.

Incorporating these green blocks of time daily will create more predictability and certainty for you. If you are on your own growth curve as much as within your regular business structure, you gain some flex and gain the ability to prune and snip where you need to and trust nature for the rest of the relationship to take you and the Client relationship to where it needs to go.

Then there is an effective, efficient way for Clients and your support to be apprised of your activities without you continuously updating with emails or return calls.

That is some sort of check-in system where you agree to agree but also you have some things that are documented, some way to check in and support, for you and I those are the Coach on-Call arrangements where they need (or want) to update us when changes or surprises happen. We can do the same for them, and I have found text messages to actually be invaluable for that.

It is easy, on the run, not something that you are required to respond to, more or less just something I want them to know. That has been a real time saver for me.

Continuously challenging yourself and making things more and more cost-effective and profit contributing as you go forward, and that has to do with handling your experiences.



Differently, the four things Green time-blocking is not about:

- it is not about simply trying not to waste time
- it is not a rigid decision
- it is not a “To Do” List
- it is definitely NOT a quick fix

Most of your time is productively used after you have cleaned out the fluff anyway. No rigid declaration, because change is the order of the day, and you are not really bowing to a tight to-do list because there is always a bit of room in what is coming up. Not a quick fix, but it is a kind of mind set you begin to acquire and it begins to train and teach you as you go forward.

**JN:** I think I may have not been knowing it, but reading this and typing it, listening to you, I can really identify some of the things over the past year as my business begins to transition over the past year into something more I crafted and not about being “on the go” but as you said “be on the grow.” I was like, I am in the growth stage, and I love it.

Ok, I know where I am at, I get Green-Blocking now because I can identify those things that have happened intuitively and also through work with my Business Coach, and thought process, and mindset. You have to continually renew yourself, you have to renew your mind and those things change all the time. Just because I may have this set now it doesn't mean in six months, or a year or five years I don't need to re-evaluate. I have to constantly keep myself re-evaluated so I am on-track for what is happening now.

This is fantastic, I think green-blocking is the best thing ever!

**SL:** I am grateful for Todd Duncan, I never worked with him literally, but I read his book once, and thought, oh, there are a lot of applications of this. I love his Hourglass concept, and managing your move and not your time. I don't like hourly work to begin with. We get as much done in 15 minutes as we do in an hour and a half at times. Experience counts there, and The Law of the Broom can help support that.

## Green-Blocking Your Calendar

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I don't know what you are going to clean up over Thanksgiving, but I am mainly going to celebrate that I have already been applying this and I get to have a fully open, upcoming weekend.

**JN:** Thanks for another great show! Join us tomorrow we will wrap up this Week of Wallet and do our recap show Thursday.

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For more info or to schedule a Conversation:  
Sherry Lowry | 512-300-1380 | [Sherry@SherryLowry.com](mailto:Sherry@SherryLowry.com)