

Jennifer Navarrete: Thank you for joining us today. My name is Jennifer Navarrete, and I am joined by Sherry Lowry who is sharing her knowledge on what it takes to **Build Your Business Once**, and then evolve it and YOU.

Sherry, I know we are jumping into a brand new focus this week, and I say that we dive right in.

Sherry Lowry: Thanks! Well, bring your water wings. Today we are going to talk about creating a good strategy's bottom line. There is stuff that goes on with that because if you don't have a competitive advantage, then don't compete until you do. Today I would like to help people figure out what might be their own competitive advantage, or how to go about finding that.

In contrast to Passion, there is a lot of press going on right now and for the past five to seven years about finding your Passion. You and I had this conversation when we were planning this. Passion to me is not something you go out, find, harpoon and drag home. To me – and for me, Passion comes and finds (me and) you and will not let you alone 'til you do something with it **if** you create the white space and the way to be with yourself first. This is because, when you are being fully with yourself, we can't keep you from doing what you are supposed to be doing here and what you have already been prepared to do.

With all that stated, **what is Strategy anyway?** It has gotten all confused in the popular literature, though not so much in the research. Shelves and shelves in the bookstores talk about Purpose, Mission, Values, and Needs. ABD they talk about Strategy in many books with the word Strategy in the title, but what actually is it? We are going to come at it backwards, first being to find **what it is not**.

What Strategy **does** is provide you with a way, almost a map, through challenge or a response to a challenge or an opportunity or a pathway for rising to the occasion. It allows you – and supports you – in building a bridge between what you would consider Purpose and Action, and between Desire and Physical Outcomes.

It faces the problem or issue squarely, it can be stated or defined. It is not fuzzy it is not fluff; it is not idealistic chest beating. We have a lot of that going on right now, by the way.

It does provide a filter and it is not a goal; it is not a pie in the sky objective. and it is based on what you bring to the table already, already knowing, really accurate and astute about. It does it through your existing resources, capabilities, skillsets, assets. The most beautiful thing it does is *it forces choice*.

The whole reason that people do not have a “good to great strategy” is they refuse to choose. So, does any of this sound familiar to you, Jennifer?

JN: Yeah, I really like how you talk about that. It is not something you go out and capture, it is something that captures you. Once it captures you, you can't help but live, breathe, do, experience, talk about it. It just becomes all-encompassing, and overwhelming.

That is fine, that is a spark, a starting place. What do you do with that, and you need a Strategy to take that passion, that energy, that excitement and make it something that can be impactful, and beneficial.

SL: That is exactly right. It is really hard for us to go 100% in the beginning for what it is we want to name, identify, then create, and build so we can foundation it in such a way that we can continue our growth of it, expand upon it, create changes in it, and then share it. Or, collaborate with that as a fundamental place we are coming from.

So, it does force you to choose and focus, which is one of the reasons we spent so much time last week on the time-consuming Focus and Choice topics. So, with that let's re-identify what we can eliminate because it is not a huge stretch goal.

A lot of people think of all this as a Strategy if you give me a target hard enough to hit, and that I will stay on-target with just focusing on that. This is not actually how it works. A lot of people confuse Strategy with Goals, especially big, big, Stretch Goals, and with ambition and with ego stuff, and pipe dreams, and motivational rhetoric. Take an Elevator Speech for example, if you have ever been in a room where someone is saying the same thing for that they basically said in the last meeting they went to, maybe with a different audience, and you have the experience of having heard it before, you will feel the energy in the room drop when that person speaks.

When others ask, "What do you do?" If what you (or others) say they do has no relation to where they are – meaning the group they are with, AND they are not speaking to a particular person or particular idea, you will sense it right way and will know it is a canned Elevator Speech or simply their maybe worn out version of it.

Even though it takes 15 seconds, about the time it takes to get to the next floor in the elevator, it is not the purpose of the Elevator Speech.

We will address useful and relevant Elevator Speeches before we complete this as well.

So, with that, what have you thought about your competitive advantage given the business you are in now, and how you have evolved that?

JN: I think it has a lot to do with the fact I have been in this space for a while, not to say you have to be a veteran to get what you want out of this, but when a Client says I want these ten things, or I am told I need to have these ten things, instead of me saying "Yes, let's do all ten things," because all ten things would mean more money in my pocket, the first things I tell them is this.

"Do you really need all those things? Can you really sustain all of those?" For me, one of things I go over with the Client when we first talk is the tools.

Do you have time to dedicate to all these plans? Do you have the team to support it? What plans do you have that will facilitate those things you want to do?

I think experience has helped me to identify that because maybe early on I might have been like, "Yeah! Let's do all that stuff!"

So, if they think they want all those things, but in reality probably what they need at this point is to get started, it is more one to three things. Then over time, they can develop a new platform or engage in a new Strategy and expand the model.

SL: That is very useful. So you actually have a little path you can invite them onto now, and you earned it the hard way = You worked for it. There are people who have come to you who have also had an appreciation for time, tool and talent. They probably have each brought available time, available energy, innovative spirit, and some tools along with them you recognize some of, and

how within them, and probably through how they demonstrate, what a core talent is that can fit with your organization.

So, if we built a template, for example, we will pull this handout somewhere in our tool kit so people can access it, so they can do this for themselves.

Though you maybe have a template for crafting your own Strategy, which you might or might not have had in the past, but you now do have it. And the first thing that will go into that template if we were to do one, two, three, four components of the template, will be exactly what you thought your competitive advantage was in the beginning, and how to identify this will be something you already have. Only you can count on it independently, or with your team, to continue to stay present and available to you for long enough for you to begin to leverage it.

In your case, you made sure when you incorporated this as you evolved, had time, had tools, and had talent.

With that the energy would be automatically built and sparked, you already had the beginning, and there and that was partly in your Vision. You were *on mission* to create what you created probably before you named it all. The second piece of our four-part template and one of the biggest challenges is actually *naming* your biggest challenge: Identifying what the nature of what your most significant challenge is going to be. This can simplify what often is overwhelming in terms of complexity.

When you first start something like you started, you were doing parts and pieces of some of it before, then needed to take those pieces and weave them together into Brewing Media.

So, you had already identified certain aspects of situations as critical situations, and as things you guys had to resolve, get on top of, or take care of in order to set you free to do what you came to do.

Right there, you were forced to choose and to focus.

IN the beginning what was one of the larger challenges you thought you might have, or discovered you had, Jennifer?

JN: It goes back to saying “Yes!” to every opportunity that came my way, especially in the podcasting area, and social media space. It is an industry now, but it was not an industry then.

So, people kind of circled my way as that piece of my business was developing because that did not exist before.

I was taking on everything every time a person came my way because it was so few and far between and while it was exciting for people to say, “Hey, we would like to pay you for this” – to do a thing I had been doing as a hobby or for fun, at the same time it was not all consuming in the way I thought it would be, and it was more frustrating than anything.

I started to peel back and not accept everything, but narrow down the things I would like to do.

I DO have a passion for doing it, you could not stop me from doing it. Then suddenly, I was getting Clients and projects that were satisfying and not just personally and professionally, but also monetarily.

I was doing it because we have in San Antonio a community-based environment and a lot of us were farming work out to one another. We still know the different fits, and we know whom it is best for potential Clients to work with.

That is a nice thing to be aware of – for whom each Client would be a better fit.

SL: That began to help you build the basis of your model now, bringing a whole collective of talent together to present more or less in packages or for focus to particular projects. That had to be gratifying.

I kind of watched from the side, how you were developing that and was not surprised it worked. I also thought it was fascinating how you drew the history of the past forward, even with the name, Brewing Media. One of the things you had done before was focus on coffee, correct?

You grew out of a coffee shop and bakery and there is a lot of history in the background of this kind of thing.

JN: My sister and I had started a coffee podcast back in 2005.

SL: I remember that.

JN: My Mom had a bakery a few years ago where she made kolaches, and all sorts of stuff. There is a lot of history there, and that is why my company is called Brewing Media.

Because it feels like me, and creating a mixture of media to fit the particular Client or particular project. Not one size fits all. I know I don't want to say that but it really does have to fit the project and company for it to work.

You may be great for them, but if they will not actually support it, and the time team and tools it is a waste of everyone's time

SL: So, for you in terms of developing Strategy the third part of that template would be your *guiding policy* or *underlying philosophy*. You have a place you are coming from that will help with your going forward process. You already had some experience with mapping out, this is also the five-year over-all approach which made you release and set aside some of the things you could have done instead. This automatically helped you handle some of the challenges of saying, "Yes" because when the "Yes's" got bigger and more focused and complex, and you had more things you could do, you simply did not want to make the space for. And, you knew somebody else who was better to do those particular things. You had a lot of knowledge of who that might be.

It was helpful for you to know ahead of time where you would stand, what you would stand firm on, what for, what you want to do, that is an important piece, and you must know what you are done with, what you don't want to do any longer.

At some point, and this is still in section three, now at some point you will be establishing ethic and protocols.

That is when we begin to talk quality of staff and quantity of staff, or contracting assistance, and what tools are necessary and absolutely needed but are optional.

You addressed a little bit of that the last two sessions.

Then the fourth piece is identifying what your literal actions could be, and I think in this case we will ask they be very specific. Able to be observed or measured, let you lead from a Strength, and we will get to that in a future session, so they

actually help you demonstrate why you and your company are the most qualified, the most accessible, and the most progressive.

That is the fourth piece. So a template is hard for some people to do, and it is very natural for other to do.

With that, I am going to stop, and next time we will get into Vision, Purpose and Mission, and why I do those differently from most people.

JN:Wow, another fantastic show, I am pretty sure most listeners are thinking she does that every show.

The theory at the beginning of starting something, floundering around trying to figure it out, Sherry is laying out the groundwork for some thought processes and strategic planning. That is what is going to continue on for the rest of the month.

Thank you for another Fantastic show, Sherry.

SL: Thank you, I am enjoying it. See you tomorrow.

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