

The Peaceful Productivity Podcast  
**Ep #92: Creating More Time In Your  
Business**



Full Episode Transcript

[The Peaceful Productivity Podcast®](#), with your host *Kim Christiansen*

## Ep #92: Creating More Time In Your Business

Welcome everyone. I'm Kim Christiansen, and this is the Peaceful Productivity Podcast, where I share strategies to help you get the most out of your time and feel better in the process.

Hi, everyone. Welcome to this episode of the Peaceful Productivity Podcast. I'm your host, Kim Christiansen, and I'm really excited to talk to you today about an awards dinner that I went to. This awards dinner was to recognize and honor small businesses around the province where I live in four different categories.

The first one being Best Youth Entrepreneur. The second was E-commerce experience. The third was business impact. And the fourth was Premier's People's Choice. It was so fun being at these awards. So fun. So many different innovative types of businesses. So much entrepreneurial spirit and energy at the dinner.

I just had such a great time. And I really want to give a shout out to all of the winners and all of the nominees. It was really a lot of fun. I was blown away by the innovation and the different types of businesses that there are out there. You know, so much of our economy is built on small businesses and it really is just so exciting to be a part of all of that.

So that was a lot of fun. I had the chance to talk to a lot of these different business owners and something that kept coming up over and over again was the fact that they've been able to generate revenue. They've tested their products and services and found them to be viable. And so they've got steady streams of income and they've stabilized those revenue streams in a lot of cases.

And now they're looking to create capacity in their business. That capacity, that additional space and time in their business could be used for things like family time, personal time, or creating more growth almost right across the board. All business owners, in my conversation with them, as well as in their acceptance speeches, all talked about a passion for their business, as well as the number one reason that most of them went into business was for flexibility.

And so, it got me to thinking about how business owners can both optimize, Um, their ability to be flexible and also to create more capacity in their business. I've talked a lot about mindset and beliefs around time and money and energy and how that can be instrumental in terms of changing your approach to business can really free up a lot of capacity in your business.

In terms of strategies that might help, I like to look at streamlining operations, especially for those people who are transitioning from stabilization over to growth. And so today, what I want to talk to you about are some strategies that you can employ to create more capacity in your business, whether you want to use that capacity for personal time, or if you wanted to use that capacity to scale and grow your business.

Best way that I know how to create more capacity in your business is to streamline your processes. There's a lot of different benefits to streamlining processes, including increased efficiency. You can also save costs, because you're removing redundant costs or costs that might've been required in the beginning but are now basically obsolete.

I know that that can happen quite regularly. We bring on a new system or some new type of innovation early on in order to get us to where we want to be. But without regularly revisiting that. And maybe

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exploring automation or delegation, then those costs, they're no longer producing a return on your investment.

So it's good to take a look at where your costs are currently going and whether or not they continue to be relevant and helpful. Other benefits of streamlining processes is that it can enhance productivity. So, for you and your team, whether that's employees or contractors or even just yourself, when you are working more efficiently and effectively, when there's less confusion and minimizing errors, it allows for more focus on your core tasks, your value added tasks, I call them.

But I think more importantly, increased productivity can help to improve our morale, our engagement, our level of satisfaction. Not just for ourselves as business owners, but for those people that work with us, our team, our contractors, our suppliers, etc. Etc. There's nothing more frustrating than a broken process.

So when your processes aren't streamlined, you and your employees, your suppliers, your customers might be feeling frustrated and maybe not even feeling heard. I'll give you a great example. So I was on social media the other day, I saw a post that was basically calling out a business for not delivering on their promises.

So, it said, I just finished this class and I was committed to it, so I finished it, but it was sadly disappointing. The instructor showed up at least one hour late each day, was unorganized, spent all their time with this one student, and then gave that student a prize. And this person went on to say, what a joke.

She then named the company and said, do not ever work with them. Do not take their classes, run away. And that's how she ended the post. This post went out to her entire Facebook community. When I read this, it brought to mind two things for me. One is that obviously this instructor could benefit from some process improvement from getting organized and actually being able to create the space to deliver on their promises.

So obviously that would be helpful for that person. But they also might benefit from a mechanism by which their customers can provide feedback back to them. Because the sense that I got was that this customer who made this post on social media didn't feel like they were heard. They didn't feel like they had a mechanism to provide the feedback back to the instructor and to the course. Oftentimes that's the source of many of our customer complaints is the fact that they don't feel like they are being acknowledged or heard in their complaints. Of course, we know this intellectually. The customer is always right. And we want to make customer service our number one priority.

But when it comes to the minutia of operating a business and delivering our services, we can sometimes lose sight of that. So a process that you can implement is having an automatic mechanism to collect feedback and to reach out to your customers to measure their customer satisfaction. All that to say that having streamlined operations, smooth processes can eliminate frustration for yourself as the business owner, for your employees, and also for your customers.

So you've gotten to the point where you want to streamline processes and create more capacity in your business, and you're wondering how to go about doing it. Well, the very first thing that I would like to offer is to actually set aside some time for process improvement in your calendar. The number one reason why people don't improve their processes is because they say that they don't have time.

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So it becomes a little bit of a vicious cycle because the lack of attention to their processes is actually creating a lack of time. Because we feel like we're running around and putting out a lot of different fires all the time. But then it also feeds this story that we don't have enough time. So we're perpetuating this idea that we don't have enough time by not giving ourselves time to work on processes.

If this is you, then you're not alone. But I see this all the time. It's quite prevalent. The first thing that we want to do when we get into business is focus on revenue generating activities. So with the focus on generating revenue, streamlining operations can often fall to the bottom of the priority list.

So the first thing I'd like to offer in terms of strategies is just simply, carving out some time in your calendar to take a look at your processes, whether it's just an hour or two a week, the more time and effort you put into improving processes, the more time savings, cost savings, and reduce stress that you will realize in the future.

I talked last week about the Eisenhower matrix in the episode on prioritization. And I talked a little bit about what to do when all of the items on your task list fall into the important and urgent category. So process improvement, it's important, but it's not in the important and urgent category, which is the reason why it often gets put to the side.

It falls into the important and not urgent category, and when everything else is urgent, it's really, really challenging to get to the important and not urgent items. So that's why I like setting aside time in my calendar for those important and not urgent items, as well as the important and urgent items. It's really giving yourself time to focus on all of the important things, whether they're urgent or not.

There are different strategies to give yourself that time. One of my favorites is time blocking. Once you've got that time in your calendar, then the next question is, well, where do I start? And with anything like this, I like to start small, make it manageable. and not try to do everything all at once. So the first step would be to take a look at your current state.

Now, this is very much aligned with lean methodology. I have a green belt in lean and the thing that we always start with is looking at current state, just getting a sense of all of those core processes that are so important in your business. I like to think of them as the skeleton of your business.

They are the backbone of your business. They hold your business up and they provide structure. Starting really high level, what are those key processes that enable you to create and deliver value to your customers? To start out with, it might just be a list of those processes. Once you've got a list of your key processes, then it's simply a matter of choosing one in order to break it down and start to zoom in on the details of that process.

If you've never done any process work before, I can help you with that. This is my passion, enabling companies to save time and money so that they can grow in a sustainable and efficient way. It's my jam. So please feel free to reach out. via my website, [financialwellnesscoach.ca](http://financialwellnesscoach.ca). But if you've never done any process work before, then where I like to start is with the customer journey.

The customer journey is probably the most important process that you have in your business. It's a walk through the interactions between your customer and your business through the eyes of your customer. So not through your own perspective, through your own lens, but through the lens of the customer. So what's it like to be a customer of your business?

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The reason why I say this is probably the most important process is because it will help you to identify, the opportunities for making that journey with your business a little bit smoother. That's obviously where we want to spend our resources initially, because that interaction with our customer is the most important interaction, the most important relationship.

Once you've identified your core processes and the one that you want to start with, then it's a matter of breaking that process down into its constituent steps. And the best way to do this is to solicit the input of stakeholders. What I mean by stakeholders is all of those people that participate in the process.

Even if you're a solopreneur, there is an interaction with your suppliers, your contractors, your customers. When you're mapping out the process, you want to involve as many of those stakeholders as possible. This is often a mistake I see that many process mappers make is they don't involve stakeholders.

Their thought process is, I don't want to bother people or I already know what's happening. I know the process well enough that I don't need to get any further input. The problem with that is that this exercise is meant to illuminate. To highlight the blind spots and we can't see the blind spots unless we are soliciting the input of other stakeholders.

One of the challenges of being a solopreneur or an entrepreneur, small business owner with a small team is that we can often get locked into our own perspective and not necessarily reach out and consider the perspectives of other people who are participating in the processes associated with our business.

So, it becomes a little bit like an echo chamber, a vacuum, where we're reinforcing our own perspective over and over again, and we stop considering how our processes are impacting our number one stakeholders. The results of which end up being the kind of negative feedback that was shared on social media the other day that I spoke about earlier.

Once you've mapped out the process, then you can do a little bit of process analysis. With process analysis, what you really want to do is take a look at where are the broken links in your process. Getting the input of all the stakeholders will help to highlight some of those broken links that you weren't even aware of.

Once you've got a listing or a map of all of those broken links, I recommend focusing on one or two. There are basically two mistakes that I see when business owners get to this stage of the process improvement exercise. The first one is that they want to tackle all of the broken links all at once. And that makes sense, especially if those broken links were previously hidden to the business owner and they're just becoming aware of them.

They feel this urgency, this reactivity to make it work as quickly as possible. The other mistake that I see is that they will quickly jump to a solution without really understanding the root cause of the broken link or the problem in the process. This is human nature. We get a surface level understanding of the broken link or the problem, the issue, and we think we know exactly what the problem is, and what the solution should be without any further investigation. Raising to a solution like that is really like putting a band aid on a broken arm. It might solve the issue temporarily, but it's not really identifying and addressing what's really going on underneath the surface.

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So the next step is to do some root cause analysis. My favorite tool for doing root cause analysis is the five whys. You may have heard of this tool before. It is basically just asking why over and over again until you get to the root cause, rather than just stopping at the first reason that comes along.

Once you've got the root cause, then you can fix the broken arm, not just apply a Band Aid, so to speak, coming up with the solution in collaboration with all of the stakeholders is very important and also creating a bit of an implementation plan. Because, again, you're working with a number of different people, so coordinating their involvement and their accountability in the process improvement is key to making sure that you have a successful implementation.

And then coming back to it, monitoring it, making sure that what you've applied and implemented is actually meeting your expectations. So, in summary, in order to do a process improvement exercise, the five steps are number one, map the process. Number two, identify the broken links in the process. Number three, do a root cause analysis.

Number four, brainstorm solutions with all of the stakeholders. And number five is implement and monitor. I can help you with any of these steps. So if you're interested in creating more capacity in your business in order to balance your home with your business or create more capacity for scaling and growth, I'll invite you to reach out to me.

You can always find me on my website, [financialwellnesscoach.ca](http://financialwellnesscoach.ca). Have a great day, everyone. Are you looking for a coach who will help you increase your business profit while protecting your time and your well being? If so, I'll invite you to check out my website, [financialwellnesscoach.ca](http://financialwellnesscoach.ca).