



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Episode 026 with Lor Bradley

How To Create A Killer 90-Day Plan

Introduction

Welcome to the Scale and Skyrocket your business podcast with me, your host, Lor Bradley. If you're looking for super smart ways to scale your business and build a business that serves you (and not the other way around) then stay with me as every week, I'll be sharing my simple time-smart strategies on how you can scale your business by working smarter and not harder.

And a very happy 2022 to you! I hope you all had a super Christmas break and feeling bright-eyed, and bushy tailed ready to slay your year ahead!

I've got a great episode for today, and this one is perfect to kick start 2022. We're going to focus on 90-day planning. So, in this episode I'm going to walk you through the concept of 90-day planning, how it can help you to uplevel your business and how you can easily create a plan for your own business!

We all talk about having a plan nailed down for the whole year ahead, but have you ever considered what would happen to your business if the marketplace changes, or trends change or your client base changes during that time?

And this is where 90-day planning comes in and it's a great way of staying on top of the shifting changes happening in and around your business. And if you incorporate 90-day planning into your business routine then it's going to give you an advantage over everyone else because you'll be much more agile and able to respond to changes at shorter notice. So, when you're scaling your business, 90-day plans really are where the magic happens!

I have talked to many business owners about whether they have a plan written down and we've had various answers. Many say they simply don't have a plan. Some will say they have one, but it's tucked away in their head.

And, if it's tucked away in your head then is that a plan? Hmm not really.

And for those that do have a written plan, it's usually created, then filed away, gathering dust! If it does get pulled out, it's usually at the end of the year, or you find it again under a stack of books when you do a clear out. It's usually the case that when they dust it off to look at it, they've realised they're totally off track with their original plan in some way.



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I've always worked to a 90-day plan cycle, and it's helped me to stay focused, productive and feeling as though I'm on top of my marketplace.

What is a 90-day plan?

Well, a 90day plan is (in its simplest form) an action plan for your business and it has two main functions:

- One – The action plan looks forward for just the next 90-days.
- And two – a 90-day plan focuses on the actions that you're going to take to bring you closer to the goals you've set for your business.

And I really love the 90-day time duration because it aligns nicely to:

Your financial quarters, so it's great for aligning any investment you might need to make in your business alongside your financial reviews.

It takes you through a deep dive business review and planning exercise every quarter, so you'll always be on top of your business. And I'm just going to say here, if you want to take a deep dive into how to do a business review – do check out podcast episode 16 where I'll take you through that in more detail. I'll leave the link for that in the show notes.

90-days is also long enough to focus you on making a significant dent into your business goals and it's short enough so that you don't lose focus or motivation.

Why Do you Need A Plan?

Well, it's so easy to be diverted off track and down rabbit holes and having a plan is going to keep you focused on the way forward. Some of the ways you might go off track when you don't have a plan are:

Your vision changes, or maybe you have an unexpected big life changing event like getting married or going travelling for 6 months for example.

You can also tend to go off track without a plan when you get distracted by shiny new things. You throw your intentions out the window, and then you follow the shiny new thing and then you wonder why your business isn't getting the traction you'd hoped for.

And lastly, your customers and marketplace is constantly flexing and changing. And if you don't have a plan, or a plan that we regularly keep up to date then you guessed it, you risk being left behind whilst the world around you changes.

And I don't want that to happen to you – as you're too smart for that, right?



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What Makes For An Effective 90-Day Plan?

Well, the most effective 90-day plans are simple ones! The less complex you make them, the more agile you can become in our business and that's really important when you're scaling.

Now, planning your next 90 days in business doesn't have to be terrifying or time consuming. The secret here is to keep your plans lightweight, chunked out in small steps and closely aligned to the goals you want to set for your business.

Now a great plan will always be nudging you closer to your vision because if you aren't doing the things to bring you closer to achieving your vision then, well, it's going to take you longer to get there. And worst-case scenario, you may not ever get there!

Why 90 Days?

90-day business plans are really popular right now and for good reason. 90-days is short enough that you don't lose your focus, but long enough that you can make significant progress toward your goals. It's really the perfect amount of time for a plan.

When I consult for the corporate world, I see them creating detailed plans at the start of the year that lays out their strategies and tactics for the whole year ahead, they add detailed timelines all the way through to the end of that year.

They spend massive amounts of time and effort on this exercise, usually whole teams of people are involved in this process. And then a few months, or even weeks later, something changes and then boom, the business has to focus on new priorities. Those carefully crafted plans now have to be done all over again.

It's unproductive and well, it's just crazy to work that way!

Things move at a fast pace in business so things that you decide on at the beginning of the year may become outdated a few months later. A better system when you're in a small business is to create a high-level big picture vision and save the juicy details for your 90-day action plans.

Focusing on 90 days at a time also gives you the flexibility you need to achieve your goals AND change direction if you need to so it's a really smart way of working.

I find that 90-day planning works really well. Its short-term focused enough that you won't feel overwhelmed. It keeps you on track with your short-term direction AND keeps you productive week on week. The things on your 90-day action plan will bring you closer to your business vision!



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Tip! Create A Plan That Works For YOU

It's really important to have a 'working plan' that works for YOU, that keeps you moving forward toward your goals.

You still need to know, even at a high level, what you want to achieve in the longer-term in your business (which is why it's good to also have a longer-term higher-level plan), so I always like to suggest thinking ahead for 3 to 5 years ideally.

Also, I want you to remember, planning a whole year ahead in great detail is also not a productive use of your time. As I have already mentioned, a lot can change during your year ahead, and it is far too time consuming to plan a whole year in detail anyway. It's much smarter and productive to focus on generating as many results as you can with this shorter time-period.

So, a 90-day plan also helps you gain momentum. You don't want to wait until the end of the year to see results, do you? No, you want to see success early in the year, and regularly thereafter, because that will keep you motivated to keep going.

If this is the first time creating your 90-day action plan, then stay with me for these steps:

If you don't yet have a 90-day plan, then now's the perfect time to get started one, especially in January.

I'm going to guide you through some questions which you'll need to think about as you start to create your plan for the next 90 days. Now, use this podcast episode in whichever way that works for you. You might prefer to listen in one go, scribble down notes or you can stop the audio, take time to answer each question and come back to the podcast when you're ready. It really doesn't matter.

Go with whichever works for you.

STEP 1: Your Previous 90-Day Goals

Now I want you to think about the goals you had set yourself during the last 90-days. If you haven't set yourself any clear goals, then think of this part of the exercise as looking back on the things you wanted to achieve.

I do have a free training video on how to set goals so if you're rusty on goal setting then I'll leave the link for you to check that video out.

STEP 2: Think About The Goals You Have In Progress

Think about which goals you already have in progress and you're on target to reach. What do you think it is about these goals that are propelling you forward to achieve them – is it because they're enjoyable? Is it what you're great at?



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And I say this because it's always a savvy move to reflect on your behaviours and those personal drivers that sit behind what works well, because you'll want to capitalise on THOSE things in your next 90-days.

For example, you're going to hit your sales targets because you thrive on the buzz of selling! Focusing, on what's working well will always catapult you forward when you're scaling up your business!

Write those things down or circle them if you have your plan in front of you. Sometimes highlighting them in a different colour helps, for example, Green for on track, Amber for at risk and Red for late.

STEP 3: Think About The Goals You've Already Completed

So, did you accomplish everything on your list? What did you achieve? Some people like to cross things off their lists and never look back but, I believe celebration and reward is so important to keep us motivated! It's easy to lose sight of how far you've come until you look back.

Make sure you plan in some time for celebration, or for whatever little treats that keep you motivated. My small treat is watching a Netflix box set or, a bigger treat would be a weekend away adventure walking.

Write your accomplishments down now.

STEP 4: Think About The Goals You're Still Struggling With

Now think about those goals where you're still struggling. Are there any goals that you need to spend more time focusing on? What's holding you back from achieving these?

Again, it's always a savvy move to reflect on your behaviours and those personal drivers sitting behind what doesn't work so well because, you'll want to change your approach on those things in your next 90 days.

For example, you didn't get your blog posts written because you hate writing! By being aware of what's not what's working so well, you'll have the opportunity to look at delegating it, or outsourcing it, or perhaps approaching the task in a different way so that it 'feels' different.

So, with my last example, you might hate writing but LOVE talking. So, your obvious change of approach would be to switch over to a podcast or use a tool to transcribe your speech and then quickly turn that into a blog post.

Write those things down now.

STEP 5: Now think about What Else Do You Need To DO?



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Think about the other things in your business you've noticed needs improvement. Sometimes you'll have major tasks which don't necessarily support your business goals but will still need to get actioned in your plan.

Think about those tasks now and write them down.

STEP 6: Think About What You've Learned

Now think about the learning you have taken in the last 90-days. This might be from the scrapes you've been through, client feedback, or from other places. What have you learned?

I ask this because you probably will have taken notes for these things, or for the new things you'd like to try, or implement into your business. And these new things will need to be factored into your new 90-day action plan.

Write these things down now.

STEP 7: Seasonal Things To Consider

Also, there may also be seasonal things to consider in your planning. Are you going to take vacations during the next 90-day period? If so, a small tip from me, make sure your 90-day action plan covers enough blog posts and newsletters that you can write in advance to cover the time that you are on vacation, so that you can relax and enjoy yourself. This is where batching your content really comes into its own here.

Write these things down now.

STEP 8: Allow Yourself Time To Grow

Don't forget about your personal development.

Being in business for yourself, you can't afford to let your learning slide, even when life gets really hectic. We have to wear so many hats in business so it's good to factor in small amounts of time to continually add to not just your business but your personal growth.

But, if you're anything like me then you could easily go down a rabbit hole spending too much time learning, too much time watching TED talks and no time actually implementing what you learn. That's a common trap many small business owners fall into.

A great solution to this is to create your own mini personal development plan. I suggest you include at least one development goal in each 90-day action plan.



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So, have you been meaning to start meditating before you start your day? Maybe there's a mindset book that you've really wanted to get stuck into? Or a few dozen TED talks you've been meaning to watch?

List those things out and schedule those in your diary, your development plan or whatever tool works best for you. The "HOW" you do this is not important, more so that you're doing it!

STEP 9: Now Choose 3 Goals (or refresh your current ones)

Now choose three big goals to focus on in your next 90-day plan. I work to three goals, or less. If you choose more than three, it will become harder to stay focused. Don't forget you may also have things outstanding to carry over from any previous 90-day plans, so make sure you carry those things across.

If you want to be even more focused, then it's absolutely fine to go all-in and double down your focus on just one goal for the next 90-days. The more focused you can be, the better.

Simplicity is key in scaling your business. 90-days is the perfect amount of time to focus on nailing one big project. Just think about the progress that you could make by picking ONE thing every 90-days and really giving it your all!

Make sure your goals are what's known as SMART goals, that's an acronym for:

- **S**pecific (so be clear),
- that it's **M**easurable (that you can measure progress),
- **A**chievable (don't set yourself up for failure!),
- that it's **R**ealistic (and relevant to your big picture vision), and
- possible to achieve in the **T**imeframe you want to set.

You also want to give yourself a little stretch here, step out of your comfort zone and into personal growth but don't overstretch yourself into stress or by setting unrealistic targets!

STEP 10: Focus On Your Priorities

Now you have a good view on all of the things you are going to include in your plan, let's move on to Prioritising and limiting your focus. Remember, you want to keep your next 90-days and your day-to-day working as smart as possible. And that means not getting too bogged down with too many things to do.

STEP 11: Create Your 90-Day Action Plan

Now's the time to start creating your next 90-day Action Plan



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We know plan without action items isn't going to get us very far. So, after you've decided upon your focus areas and goals for the next 90-days, break each one down into 3 to 5 action items. These should be major steps toward completing the goals you have set for yourself. Don't get too detailed at this point, or you might get lost in the detail.

Then set yourself some due dates for each action item and include them into your preferred method for planning.

I have recently been using Asana so that's going to be my tool of choice for 2022 but you can use tools such as Trello, ClickUp, AirTable or just good old-fashioned pen and paper. The most important thing to remember is that you're creating an action plan that works for you, the tool doesn't really matter right now.

This Might Trip You Up!

- When you're creating your action plan these things may trip you up:
- Make sure you consider the order of the things you want to achieve. For example, if you are setting two goals. So, that's one, to create a new website and two, to refresh your branding. You'll want to make sure that you are refreshing your branding BEFORE you create your website.
- It's always a savvy move once you've created your plan to not just check the order of things on your plan, but to check it's manageable. Make sure you're not overstretched!
- Also, things can crop up at the unlikely times so factor in some spare windows of time for these unforeseen things. It's always good to be prepared.
- And when you're ready, have a final review of your plan and then you're good to go!

Remember

Remember, your goals should be your top priorities, so that's those projects or tasks that will really move you forward in your business and toward your big vision.

And there you have it! That's how you create your 90-day plan for your business!

It's not difficult but I will say it will require you to put time aside and give it some thought about what you really want to tackle in your business in the short-term. And using the 80/20 principle (so that's by looking at the minimum effort you can apply for the maximum results) is really going to propel your business forward. So the more savvy you can be with your time, your focus and your energy then this is going to really serve you well as you scale your business.

And I cannot stress this strongly enough. Limit yourself on how many objectives and how many action items you choose to focus on in a 90-day period. The more you limit



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what you focus on, the more you're going to accomplish because you're going to actually get things done!

So, keep it smart and keep it simple!

Have a great day, and I'll see you in the next episode! Until next time,

Lor Bradley