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AMBITION TO ACHIEVEMENT: GOAL SETTING THAT WORKS

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>> OPERATOR: Recording in progress.

>> ALEXIS JONES: Welcome, everybody. I'm going to give everyone a minute or two to get in and get their audio connected and we'll get started. Thank you all for joining us.

(Pause.)

>> ALEXIS JONES: Looks like we have a good audience building for today. I'm happy to see so many folks joining us. Wonderful.

All right. Today's webinar is called Ambition to Achievement: Goal Setting That Works.

Next slide, please.

So before we get started we are going to go over some basic housekeeping information to make sure everyone can access the functions within the webinar.

Zoom settings. The audio for today's meeting can be accessed using computer audio or by calling in by phone. If you select computer audio, make sure your speakers are turned on or your headphones are plugged in. To call in, (301)715-8592. The meeting code is 896 5265 1186.

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Next slide, please.

Questions and technical assistance. Please send your questions, concerns, and any requests for technical assistance to the NDI host via the chat box. Questions will be addressed by the presenter if time allows.

If you would prefer to ask your question in ASL, please raise your hand and wait to be called on by the host.

If your question is not answered during the webinar, you are listening by phone or you are unable to use the chat box, please email info@disability small business.org.

Please note this webinar is being recorded. The materials will be available at disability small business.org on the past events page within one to two weeks.

And again, welcome to today's webinar, Ambition to Achievement: Goal Setting That Works.

Today's information will be presented by Joanne Eriaku. The contents of this webinar was developed under grant number H421F240198 from the Department of Education.

However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policies of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

Before we get started and turn it over to Joanne, we are going to do a short poll just to gauge everyone's baseline understanding of the materials to be presented. It is four questions. They all have a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

We will leave it up for two or three minutes for everyone to have a chance to respond. Please do take the poll. It will be given now and again towards the end of the presentation in the hopes of seeing how today's material has influenced your learning and your responses to the questions.

I am going to launch the first poll now.

And we will give everyone a minute to take it.

(Pause.)

>> ALEXIS JONES: I see lots of responses coming in. We'll give it one more minute and then we'll move forward.

(Pause.)

>> ALEXIS JONES: All right. Thank you, everyone, for taking the time to complete this. And thank you for joining us for Ambition to Achievement: Goal Setting That Works.

At this time I'll turn it over to our presenter, Joanne Eriaku for today's presentation.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Thank you, Lexi. Happy New Year, everyone! It is the very first NDI webinar master class of the year. I would just like to welcome you all and wish you not just a Happy New Year for you as a person, but also for your business. May your business have a Happy New Year.

That is why we are having this discussion today. My name is Joanne Eriaku. I am chief consultant at Oparos Consulting. And we do a number of things, but everything that we do has to do with guiding entrepreneurs, businesses, from a place where they are to where they need to be, whether that means in terms of their starting as a business, they are still really small and they want to get profitable. Maybe they are already profitable and they are looking to see how to scale or how to expand. Whatever it is, those are, that's what Oparos Consulting does. Some of the work which we have done is with The Venture Operating System which is basically our framework. I do a lot of frameworks. You are going to notice a lot of that as we keep talking. So the venture operating system is a framework to take entrepreneurs all the way from concept to profitability.

I am a Serial Entrepreneur. I have been having businesses from the age of 11. Yes, like literal money making enterprises from the age of help. I didn't know at the time that is what it was called. I thought I was just having fun, but here we are.

We are absolutely not here to talk about me. We are here to help you go from a place of how do we actually move our goals, our dreams, our ambitions from the place of it's a dream to the place of it is an actual reality. Like actually bringing the actual dream or the goal or the ambition to come to pass.

Many of us set goals, usually at the beginning of the year. Usually at the end of the year when we are thinking you know what? For the following year I really want to do this. And some of those goals are personal goals. Some of those goals are business goals. Regardless, this is sort of like a really great framework to get you there.

Today's journey, as you can see, is going to start by really setting foundational context about what it is that actually causes most goals, dreams, or accomplishments to not come to pass. Really understanding what are those key main factors that cause us to not actually actualize our dreams.

Then we are going to go into how to actually move from, you know, you have an ambition to the point of actually bringing it to fruition.

Then if time allows or depending on how brave you are, we might be able to actually go into a live demonstration with one of you. Or we will go straight into questions. Either way, the third part is either demonstration live with one of you or it is questions.

That is our journey for today. Please feel free to put your questions in the chat. I will not be able to see them, but we have our trusted colleagues from NDI who will be able to prompt me when I need to stop if I'm talking too fast or if I am just getting too excited and forgetting that you are here to learn.

Okay. So what is it, what is -- we call it the ambition trap. What is it which causes us to dream, dream, dream, dream, and not actually get to a point of reality or actualization. Okay?

So I would like to hear from you, if you can put this in the chat, please do. Because I have my ideas. I want to be sure that you are represented in this.

So if anybody has any thoughts, any -- you must, unless you are like perfect, almost all of us have been in a situation where we set a goal, we set an ambition and we didn't achieve it. Please put in the chat what you think that reason is.

And I am going to let my trusted colleagues in NDI read out for me any responses that come in that I might miss.

Okay, let me wait and see your answers.

Lack of information. Cheryl says lack of information. Okay, too big of a goal. Nina says too big of a goal, not enough small steps.

Pauline, get lost in the day-to-day tasks and lose momentum. Or maybe it was not an interesting goal!

Lack of focus on the small goals.

They are coming in. I'm probably not reading them all. Not enough support built in to follow through, Melissa. The task may be time-consuming, Ebony.

Lack of experience, Ronald, yes, you're right, it could be that you are setting a goal of which you do not have a skill set.

This is good. You can run this webinar. I can officially go.

(Laughter.)

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: I'm kidding.

This is very good. All of you are speaking from a place of experience. Lack of knowledge, not focusing, losing motivation. Yes, that's Jana.

And struggling with accurate assessment of resources. And strategy required. Brilliant.

All of you have experience with this. Now, our hope, our hope really is that by the end of this webinar, this master class, that you can actually take the snippets of knowledge that you have here and be able to apply them in your business so that if, let's say, 50 percent of the time you are not achieving your goals, let's bring that percentage down to maybe 10 percent, okay? Because not everything may go all the way through. But our hope is really that you can be able to actualize the content that you are learning here. All right?

Let's go, then. There are three main reasons why we do not go from a place of ambition to actually achieving our ambitions.

This is the ambition trap. All these three form what we call the ambition trap. In your comments, a lot of what you shared is actually resonating with this.

So the first is really focusing on outcomes without understanding what it is going to take to actually get there. That happens a lot. And throughout this webinar you can keep putting in the chat if you have any examples to that effect.

Number one is the big one. It is usually the one where it is very easy to dream. That is one of the favorite things that a lot of us love to do, which is just to dream about the grass being greener on the other side, but not really thinking about what it takes to go from that thought to what it is actually going to take to put it into action. That is number one, not understanding the inputs.

Number two is, and somebody did put that in the chat, lacking the actual resources or the structure to bring it to actualization. Okay? They are not aligned. Your goal and your actual systems that you actually have might not be aligned. We are going to go through a couple of examples as we keep talking. I want to give you up front what the ambition trap is.

Then finally and thirdly, is really thinking that doing a lot of activity is actually you being productive. That is rarely the case. Activity in itself is a good metric if you really just want to be just physically active or just showing that you are active.

If you actually want to lead to actual outcomes, usually pausing and thinking deeper needs to be a part of the mix. Because you might find yourself doing actually more, more than you need to be doing. If anything, going off course.

But let's go deeper. Let's go deeper into each of these three. Just so you know, these are the three that form the ambition trap as we have coined it.

So let's start with the first one. Focusing on the outcomes without understanding inputs. Does anybody have any specific story, if you are brave enough to actually put it in the chat, where you are thinking more are in terms of, oh, this is the outcome that I seek. I am going to guess that movies you are either business owners or are planning on having a business.

I would like to see preferably business-related examples, if there are any, on do you remember a time when you focused purely on an outcome, a business outcome and you really did not understand what inputs were required for you to be able to get there?

I have an example for you, but I want to see yours first. So I am going to pause a little bit and see if anybody is able to put anything in the chat.

Yes, this is going to be a very interactive session because this is about us learning and not about me teaching.

Okay. All right. No brave souls yet, right?

Oh, I see a brave soul has put something in there. Let's see. No, no, somebody said yes. Ronald, you said yes, but you did not put an example. Thank you, Ronald.

(Laughter.)

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Okay. I will assume that, I will start. If anybody still wants to put it in, I will put it.

So to everyone who has a business or is about to start a business, all of us, every business is an experiment. We rarely know the true inputs which are going to be required of us at the end of the day.

Oh, sorry, I can see here in the chat. Pauline says growing a culinary program for people with disabilities, getting worried about how to get to the opening, to opening a restaurant. Okay.

And then Ronald, I had a good idea but no way of knowing how to bring it to a business.

Great, exactly! Actually, you are saying it as it is. Literally these business examples are exactly what I am trying to say. Almost every business is an experiment. We rarely -- we know the outcome that we seek. Usually the outcome might be economic, like you know, we are really looking for financial freedom. Or maybe the outcome is just most of our outcomes are financial to be very honest. Some of us it is really about impact, social impact.

EE says I have a business idea an skills related but it has a radically different field of expertise needed, or so you believe.

I believe I need much more official education. Thank you for being honest, EE.

Paige. The result, the end result I want is brain injury community and functional medicine, that is the impact. And functional medicine provider directory. Don't know how to get there business-wise.

So this is good. We all have examples of this. Now, I would like to tell us this. Number one, it is not bad to actually have an ambition and not know how to accomplish it, not understanding the inputs. Okay?

What is not honorable is knowing that you don't know the inputs and not actually going to educate yourself or to seek somebody who knows better than you so that you can learn and know what is going to be needed of you. Okay?

I just want you to know, all of us, every business owner, everybody planning on doing a business, you have seen it even in the chat, we do usually, are in this space where we are thinking in terms of an ambition and it is rare that we actually have a full understanding of the input required of us. That's fine.

What is not fine is if you leave it at that where you know that is what you would like to accomplish, okay, all right, great. How do you get to understand the inputs which are required of you?

And you can keep throughout this webinar you can keep putting your thoughts in the chat.

Where do you get those inputs? Do you go to a library, where we used to go to physical libraries and then the Internet came. Maybe you will go online.

But then that is usually a lot of work because you have to sift through a lot of files before you find the right one. Sometimes maybe it is not vetted.

So maybe that is good just for initial high level thinking. But then if you really want to get more laser focused understanding, maybe it is better to find somebody who has been there, somebody who has done it before and has more knowledge.

We call those mentors. That is the literal definition of a mentor. Or you can study it. You can go to school for it, you know?

These are some of the options. Ambition trap number one is over-focusing only on the outcome, only on the outcome, only on the outcome. And forgetting you have to think about now you have to think about how to get those inputs into action, okay?

Here is an example. It is a fairly complex image. Allow me to talk through it slowly, bit by bit.

We start at the top. Okay, I'm going to assume all of you are either in a business or planning on starting a business or know someone who wants to get good at business. We start at the top.

If you would like to double your monthly sales, okay, that is the outcome that you are looking for. That is a beautiful outcome. A lot of us, a lot of us have it. I would like to double my monthly sales, too. I really would. Everyone would, right?

But okay, good goal. Good plan. You probably made it December 31st, 2024, okay. We are now in 2025. How am I going to bring that into action, okay?

I would like you to see the progression from the outcome, that is the big Mega, sort of the highest level of abstraction is the outcome. Okay?

Usually in order to get there, you have to think from the very bottom. So we started at the top. That is the outcome you seek, okay?

Now, go straight to the very bottom. As you notice, this arrow is dual sided, okay? Double sided.

Go to the very bottom and say in order to get there, how do I get there? Hmm. Some people go straight to the bottom and they go straight to okay, I think I need to reach more people. How do I reach more people? I reach more people by creating -- maybe it is creating more content. This is just one example. Maybe it is more networking activities, whatever it is. You will notice there is a progression from outcome, the big major level, all the way down to the most minute tiny thing that is requirement of you to get there.

For the purposes of which way this image looks right now, let's go level by level down. So the big outcome is double your monthly sales. All right, how are you going to get there?

For this particular business that means they need more conversions or more leads. Meaning a bigger funnel, okay? We call those outputs. Those are not outcomes, those are outputs, which is like a mini outcomes. A mini output is a less impactful outcome. So we just call it an output.

How do we get to more leads and more conversions? We go one level lower. That means we need to either, in the case of this example, run more ads if you have the money. If you do not have the money to run more ads, maybe you need to run more webinars or maybe you need to optimize your website content. Because you might want to double your monthly sales but your website honestly looks like it is from 1980.

Or there is a client whom I had whose website, she is brilliant, she is very talented. So because of that, her mind is always running at a thousand kilometers per hours -- miles, sorry. I am from a part of the world where we say it in kilometers, I apologize. I will say it in miles. A thousand miles an hour, all right?

From that she put everything on her website and it just looked like chaos. Chaos is the best word that I can bring up for really what it looked like.

For her in her case it was going to be very difficult for anybody to become a client, which we call a conversion, because they get so confused and give up. People don't want to read too much these days, you know? In her case the activity which she needed to do was to optimize her website. No matter how many email campaigns she would be involved in, they would all lead to her website. Once people land on her website, her website was basically not doing anything for her. It was not leading to any conversions or leads.

How do you in the case of this example run ads or optimize your website? Well, number one, we need to, it would be really good if we have some sort of engaging content. Running an empty ad is not as effective as if you have content within there. Usually stories do more sales than ads. You know?

So maybe you need engaging content. Maybe you need a CRM. Maybe you actually do have a good number of people coming to your website, but because you are not able to track them because you don't have a proper tracking system or a CRM, you are losing out on being able to reach out to people with the appropriate content.

Maybe you need to train your team or yourself. Team could be you on your own, or it could be your staff members if you have any. If you want to sell more, maybe your language needs to change. Maybe you are talking too much about your features and not the benefits of your product.

So just training in that in and of itself can get you somewhere. Those are inputs. At the most bottom level those CRM team sales, training, those are the ingredients. If this was to be a chart on if the outcome that you are looking to achieve is to make -- what is the most delicious thing I've tasted of late? No, no, no, I'm going to say maybe you want to make Paella, okay? That is the outcome, you want to make paella.

How are you going to get there? Nice thought to be eating paella, but what do you need? I won't burden you by putting it in the chat, but you do need to get ingredients. The inputs are the ingredients. What do you put in the paella? Onions, tomatoes, whatever you put in there. I never made an paella, I am just dreaming of it. I'm an example of myself.

I need to get the ingredients, right? Right. I also need training on exactly how to make it. Then I need to be involved in activities. I need to buy the equipment that I am going to need, right? I have to assemble it here in my kitchen. And then I am going to have to put it all together, cook. I am actually going to have to cook. I am going to have to put it in the oven, okay? I have to put it all together.

All those things are leading to eventually at the end of the day the outcome is.

(Singing.)

Oh! Paella!

Sorry, that was a terrible example, but that is what I wanted to share with you.

Let me check the chat. What is a CRM? Thank you, Greg. I should not use acronym -- I should not assume that everybody is in my brain.

CRM is a customer relationship management. SalesForce, Zoho, what all those systems do. I am not advocating for one over another. I'm giving examples of the major names of the ones there. Every time that somebody either.

Every time someone subscribes to your newsletter or whatever it is they do, they do something on your website, they respond to a particular call to action. Any call to action, okay?

They get added on to the CRM, the customer relationship management platform. Okay? So you will have it permanently on your system where you can say okay, Greg came in through the webinar and the call to action, he downloaded this particular resource from ... you are able to see the things which Greg is looking for most.

You use that information to better serve Greg so you are not sending Greg everything that you have. You are more targeted on how you are relating with him. Maybe it is a retail website. Maybe your services are retail where somebody buys from you. Every time you go and make an account on Amazon, Target, any of those, you get sent to the customer relationship management. That is what CRM means. Thank you for asking that question, Greg. And please, everyone else, if I say anything that is a little out there, please stop me.

You are going to have access to this deck. So I am not going to read every single one of these examples. But right here I've taken that reverse pyramid that we had up there and I have laid it out here in a table format.

So you always start at the left side where the outcome is. Okay? That is the main thing which you want to do. If anyone over here has been trying to attain some sort of certification, I'm going to use that as an example because that is a big thing for a lot of small businesses.

There are steps to get you there. You can dream about it, but if you actually do not put some of these steps into action you may actually not get there.

In this case the output would be, okay, I need to submit particular documents to particular certifying authority in order to be able to get certified. Okay. A step lower to that is the activity. Okay, what are those documents? Your activities, you are researching the requirements, collecting the necessary documentation as an example of some of the activities.

Okay. So then the lowest level of thing that is required of you is the inputs. What are those inputs that you are going to need in order to actually start researching with some knowledge? Maybe you need to talk to someone in this case. Maybe you need to get guidance from someone who has done it before. Maybe you just need to sit down and have a good old ChatGPT or Google search to understand some of the things.

So this is purely an, a pure example of some of the ambitions which you may have, whether big or small. You can do this exercise for anything. It can even be in your personal life. I'm just giving you the business examples because I have to stay on brand.

(Laughter.)

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: But you understand the point, okay? You get the point.

Going to --

>> NIKKI POWIS: Before you move forward, somebody wanted to have some clarification on when you are using the term "call to action," clarification on what you mean by that.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Okay, thank you for that, Nikki. Yeah, I've just seen the question.

Okay, a call to action is, it literally is what do you want the person to do? The action that you want them to take? Whether that person is a client or a potential client. Because all of us are getting into business for a particular reason. Nobody is getting into business without any particular expectations, right?

So you have expectations. So depending upon what your expectations are, it usually involves an action from your client or your potential client.

I'm going to give you an example. If you have a store, which maybe has jewelry, you really want people to buy that jewelry. So the call to action is click on this button to purchase. It literally is your, you are calling them to act. That is why they call it a call to action. CTA is how it is abbreviated sometimes. That is an example of a call to action. You actually want they will to perform a particular action. In this case, click the buy button.

A lot of websites have a lot of, I am going to say annoying because sometimes it does get annoying. Like banners or just these things that come in and interrupt you. Maybe you are reading nice lip and this thing comes and it wants you to do something. Usually the thing they want you to do is a call to action, a call to take a particular action. Whether it is subscribe! It can also be buy! Or it could be like!

All those are calls to action.

So I hope that helps you understand what a call to action is.

And I like that you are asking me questions. This is very good. I do not like talking to myself, to be very honest.

Okay. With that, let's move on to number two. Number one was lack of understanding of the inputs required. Number two, they may be construed as similar, but they absolutely are not. Number two is lack of alignment with the resources or the systems or the structures that you have in place. So number one speaks really more to, you really don't know what you don't know. You know? So the action that you are taking in number one are really about getting to the place of understanding the inputs that are going to required of you.

Number two, now really speaks to all right, now that you know what is needed of you, you are, this ambition that you have, this goal that you have, is it in alignment, can it be aligned or can it be -- I'm using the word aligned because any other words are fairly out of the regular English dictionary. I want top say commensurate, but I am going to get that that is a very big word to use. Let's use the word alignment.

If you want to accomplish this particular goal, do you have the resources? And resources can mean, it can mean physical resources. Maybe you need physical strength, okay?

Let's pick an example, a physical example. The marathon. You want to run the marathon, okay? That is your big goal. But you have never lifted, you have never lifted the five-pound weight, you know the weights? You never lifted that. Like you don't have the stamina. So physically your body is not set up to actually be able to be aligned to that goal of running the marathon next week. You could run it in a year because you can always stock up on finding those resources, but not next week. You can't run next week's marathon if you don't have the physical stamina. That is a personal example.

Let's talk about a business example. Actually, some of you did put in the chat earlier some of your ambitions that you had. How are those ambitions lining up with the resources? I'm still on resources. I haven't gone to systems and structures. I am on resources.

Resources can be physical, they can be monetary. They can be intellectual. They can be, they can also be resources in terms of staff, human resources, okay? They call them human resources. Like do you have the Manpower, the talent or the people who can actually help accomplish the particular goal that you have? So resources can be any, really any of those. They can also be technical resources like computer. Okay? That is an example of a resource. It is a technical resource. Maybe it could be the Internet.

I come from a part of the world where there are particular things which cannot, particular goals that we might have which we actually can't accomplish there because of simple things like there is no Internet access in some of those places. So as a result of that, no, we can't do that over there. We can do it in New York, but we can't do it in Nairobi because of the banquet.

Those are examples of resources. Systems structures, systems and structures are really, now I'm speaking more to the organization level of things. Like have you organized the things, put them in place?

This could be as simple as standard operating procedures or rules. Like okay, if we want to accomplish this, what are the rules which we are going to use in order to make this possible? Or what are the processes that we need to put in place? Okay? I am speaking very -- right now I'm saying systems and structures because it varies depending upon what your goal is. But I want to get a little bit more specific.

So here is an image of what most, a good number of us do, which is we want to get to destination X and we go to our phone, Google Maps, Apple maps or whatever type of mapping thing that we have. And we punch in the direction which we want to get there.

And Google Maps maps out the route and it gets us there. We know where we want to get to, let's say you want to get to North Carolina. Charlotte, North Carolina, how do I get there? How do I drive there? That's the goal.

The goals are really the direction, but the systems -- okay, I wanted you to see this because now I'm talking about systems. The systems are the actual machinery or the engine that helps you get there. Okay?

So in this case this is an example of a vehicle. The person would like to get to North Carolina in their vehicle. If that vehicle did not have an engine on the front, no matter how well the Google Maps or Apple maps works, no matter how comfortable that comfortable or seat is, if there is no engine, meaning there are no systems or they are no structures, in the front of that vehicle to actually drive the vehicle to get to North Carolina, they are never going to get there.

So it is the same with our ambitions, with our goals. I keep interchanging between ambition, goal, dreams. It is the same principle that applies to all. Whether it is a dream you are having, whether it is an ambition, whether it is a goal. In order to get there, you need an engine to difference it. Okay?

I hope that makes sense. Feel free to put in the chat if you need me to triple clarify on anything. Okay?

But setting your goals in such a way that it is aligned with your capability is key for you to be able to accomplish that goal. Otherwise, to be very honest, it is a goal which maybe not now, maybe you are not going to accomplish it now. It is okay to be honest with yourself and instead set yourself a lower goal, which is more commensurate to your capability. Okay?

In this case, this is an image or completely misaligned will rectangular block trying to really force fit it into this circular hole that is there.

Okay, somebody has put -- Pauline, would deadlines for steps being taken be a part of the system?

Yes. Setting deadlines for particular steps would indeed be a part of the system. A small part of the system, but definitely a part of the system.

The good thing with deadlines, okay, is they keep you on your toes. You know? So that you don't just relax and say oh, I've got time. No, no, you have accountability. Almost like an accountability check, you know, on yourself. Accountability in and of itself is a system. It is an engine.

Sometimes just telling somebody else that hey, once a week I want you to check in with me and see if I've done this. That in and of itself can help you accomplish your goals.

To answer your question, yes, Pauline, deadlines can be taken as being part of the system.

I'm going fairly slowly because I want to make sure you are absolutely getting it.

Now, this is a very famous quote by the author of the book, Atomic Habits, James Clear. It is a life changing book for a lot of people, including my teenage son who had trouble creating systems. He is a very good dreamer. He has beautiful dreams, very great dreams, but very little follow-through in terms of how you are actually going to get there.

So I bought him this book. I never read it myself. I just heard it was a good book. He read it faithfully. It literally changed his life. It literally teaches you how to create the systems.

Now, I am not saying go and buy the book. That is not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is, there are tools to help you create systems, if creating systems is not your strength, okay? But James Clear made a very powerful quote which says: You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.

Meaning whatever it is you are dreaming up, the reality is not the dream. The reality is the systems that you are going to put in place to be able to accomplish that goal. Okay?

I just wanted you to see that very powerful goal. And this is almost a repeat of exactly, this is my version of James Clear's quote, meaning you can dream it, but if you do not have the fuel, your dreams will remain in the driveway. That is not cool, right?

That is not cool.

Some of our dreams do need to leave the driveway. In order to get there, there needs to be some fuels, whether it is systems, technical resources, whatever it is, whether it is money -- thank you, Lexi. I appreciate that.

Okay. Robert, you put something in the chat. I don't know if it was a question. If it is, you will clarify, put marketing problem.

If it is a question, you can clarify.

Okay. Let's go to number three. Mistaking busyness for progress. Okay? Usually you will have a business, you know, BUSINESS. We become so busy and rightfully so. Every time you think of being in a business, especially when it is still small, everything is on your shoulders. You are the CEO. You are the CFO, you are the HR manager. You are the product manager. You are the customer service. You are the tax person. You are everything. You are the driver. You are everything at the start. You will be genuinely busy, okay?

That is understandable. But do not think that because you are being so busy you are actually making progress. Sometimes activity is actually not productivity. Okay?

So for that, I am introducing to you this very busy two by two matrix. It is a matrix, okay? Let's go through it a little bit slowly and it will make sense.

On one axis, the X axis, it is important/not important, okay?

Then on the Y -- sorry, that is the Y axis, the vertical axis, important/not important. My apologies, the vertical axis, the Y axis.

Then on the X axis, urgent and not urgent are the two actions. You can create, you can draw this for yourself and map out the two activities in your life and say okay, this is the goal that I have. How many, what percentage of the activities that I am involved in in the past week or the past month are actually helping me get closer to the goal? This is a very helpful exercise.

So when you draw these two lines, okay, important, not important vertically. Then urgent, not urgent, horizontally. There come up four quadrants, meaning four possibilities.

Let's start from the top right-most, okay? It is dark brown in this image right now. Those are activities which are important and they are not urgent. That is the best time to do things, when they are not urgent. Because you have given enough time, enough thought, you have been more strategic. That is the best time to accomplish really complex, difficult, or big things to really contribute to long-term success. That is the best time, when it is not urgent. It is important, but it is not urgent. That is the best time.

Do a lot of that, as much as you can. Okay?

For example, if your plan is to double your monthly sales. I'm going to use that example like from the previous chart. If that is the big thing you would like to accomplish, what are the things you need to start doing if you want to double your monthly sales in 2025, December, Christmas, let's say. You need to start now before it is urgent. Start now. There are things you need to start putting in place. Whether it your website being optimized, whether it is getting trained, guided. Whatever you need to put in place, do it now, not when it is urgent. That is the first and best quadrant. A lot of the things we want to do are there.

Next to that quadrant on the left, currently this is the yellow one, tasks that are urgent, they are important and they urgent. The only reason you are doing them is to prevent a negative outcome. Okay? Like oh, my gosh, this has happened. I need to take care of it. Otherwise it is going to lead to trouble. Maybe it is a customer whose order did not get delivered or got damaged. Whatever it is, do it now. Maybe it is your taxes!

Hello, Uncle Sam. By the way, February's session and you will see it later, is about taxes. I encourage all of us, including myself, to be there. Okay?

So, those are for handling immediately. That is not the ideal place to be. Those are for emergencies.

Then on the bottom left-hand quadrant, tasks that are urgent and not important. They are urgent, but they are not important. You can delegate those, okay?

That's a lot of times we feel that things are urgent, impact our goals, but rarely they do. A lot of meetings fall under that. I'm so sorry. I have been in corporate for so long, we all get it. A lot of meetings fall under that. I will say no more about that.

And then the last quadrant, the right-hand side, the bottom, not urgent and not important? I would have asked you for examples, but I don't want to take too much time. Usually, hmm, now you should eliminate those so you can free up your time. You alone know what is not urgent and not important.

This is a very, very helpful exercise. I've given you examples over here for you to just, if truly that is your goal that you want to accomplish, that is the ambition, that is the thing that you would like to do, just map out your activities for the past -- you know, you can look at your calendar, just start jotting down and see how you are spending your time. You will be shocked and discover well, wow, I set this ambition but I didn't set myself up to achieve it. I hope this is a helpful tool for you. This is not my tool. This comes from years and years and years of time management and corporate research to the point that it doesn't even have a source where it came from. But I've given you examples over here and you will have access to this deck, okay?

Let me check and make sure there are no questions before I, or reports ... okay, good.

Busyness happens, this is my quote. Busyness happens when we focus on what feels urgent rather than what is truly important. That's when busyness happens.

Progress happens when you prioritize the right tasks.

So use that tool and ask yourself am I being busy or am I being progressive or productive? Okay? Progressive and productive are both in the same bracket. Okay?

All right. Now, we've talked about that. So all this, can you imagine I've taken all this time just talking about the common pitfalls in the ambition trap. It is because knowing what your enemy is helps you to be stronger, plan for it when it happens. If you don't know your enemy, that's when you really put yourself in more trouble.

So this is a symptom of you probably being busy and not being productive is if you always find yourself in firefighting mode where you find yourself putting out a lot of fires. That is emergencies. You are always dealing with emergencies, emergencies, emergencies. Unless you are a firefighter or work in the emergency services as a business, if that is your business, that is different, okay?

I am talking to the 99.99 percent of other businesses who are not in a firefighting business. Okay? We are not in the business of putting out fires.

We need to always be fire proofing for things that are urgent and important. For the majority of your calendar that is where you should be, if you want to be more productive versus just being busy, okay?

All right. So we have talked about the ambition trap. Now, let's go to, all right, now you know your enemies, the three enemies starting from the last which is about miss taking busyness for being productive. The second one was really about aligning the resources with the goal, with the ambition, okay?

And the first one was really about over focusing on the outcome and forgetting to understand the inputs. All right? That's the ambitious trap.

Now, now that we know those are our enemies, how do we actually make these goals come to reality. Right?

This is the crux of today's session. Okay? Take whatever your goal is. Between ambition and achievement there is always a gap. There is always in work that you are going to have to do. There is always something, it is always, it never rarely is that ambition and achieving that ambition do not require some version of work of some sort. Okay?

So if your ambition is to win in something like this gentleman here or you have a particular goal or a particular target, just so that you do not fall flat or fall through that cliff as it shows in this picture. So in this picture basically as you can see there is on the one -- it is a cliff side between ambition and achievement. Then there is a deep crevice between them. How do you go from ambition to achievement? Well, that's what we are talking about. We are calling it the business goals engine. I told you, I like a lot of frameworks. I frame almost everything. Once something works for me, for my clients, I usually turn it into this will be a helpful framework.

A helpful framework for accomplishing goals, and I gave it a cheesy name, achieving business goals, isn't that cheesy? Let's talk about the engine. The same way a car has an engine to drive the vehicle to where it needs to go, this is an engine forgetting your business goals from engine to the point of achievement. There are six. There are six steps. We are going to go through each.

They are not long. They are not lengthy. I'm checking to make sure. Oh, God, I think I'm running low on time. I need to spin it up a little bit.

My apologies, NDI team, I am going to speed it up a little bit more.

So we start at the very top. Okay? Define the goal. Define what the goal is. Define it as clearly as you can. We are going to go there.

Once you've defined it, we are then going to prioritize. Based upon this goal, this is where we are going to focus our energy. I'm going to give you examples. Right now I'm reading through what is here. Then we are going to clarify, okay, if this is where we choose to focus, this is how we are going to succeed.

After we clarify how we are going to succeed, we define okay, this is what is needed. Whether those are inputs in order to get us there or resources. And then number five is something we usually forget. How do you know it is actually working? You do not want to get to the middle of the year and you're like whoa, I'm actually not -- I'm busy, you know, there's a lot of activity, there is a lot of planning which went in. How do we know we are succeeding?

Finally, that is like a measurement system. And finally putting it into action. Okay?

So you are going to have access to these slides. The first two are what are I call the strategy layer. You sitting to strategize and really plan.

The next three, the bulk of it is the operations. Operationalizing is the bulk of it.

Then the final is the actual execution. Okay? So the operation builds the how. And then the execution is you actually doing it. Okay?

So let's go into each.

Number one, you are going to define what success looks like. Okay? You are not just going to say this is my goal. But you are actually going to, as best as you can, be as descriptive as you can and say okay, for example, if I am to pick that initial example. Anybody can give me an example of a goal which they would like me to double click on if they would like.

In the meantime I'm just using my generic examples. If your goal is really to double your monthly sales. If that is your goal, okay, be a bit more descriptive and really say okay, what does it mean when I've doubled my monthly sales? What does that mean? I want to double my sales in all of my products, one of my products? Do I want to double my sales on my online versus offline customers? Try to be a lot more descriptive. Try to be a lot more granular. Try and understand what success looks like to your business, okay?

If we've accomplished, if we've doubled the monthly goals, what does that look like? It might more money, but it might also mean more expenses.

So understanding what that actually means helps you to define a goal that is not just realistic but that you actually want. To you actually want this goal? Because that goal is going to be sort of like the fuel, the aspiration. It is going to fuel your -- every time you feel down or every time you feel like you don't have energy, it is going to give you energy. It will make you go wow, I can't wait to get to the place where ... whatever that goal is.

So that goal has to be worthy of your energy and your motivation. It has to be worthy of making you wake up in the morning and throw the sheets off. Not like oh, God, I have to go accomplish this goal again.

I know I'm being a little mellow dramatic, I apologize. Sorry, I'm from Africa where we are a bit mellow dramatic. I can't stress how important this is. If the goal does not energize you, it probably will not be worth your motivation, your energy, your time.

So define the goal is step one. Knowing what the aspiration is. That is the equivalent of setting the GPS direction for the whole vehicle. Once you have done that, okay, you have defined it. Now you actually say -- this is actually now where you get a little bit more niche and you say okay, I know I want to double my sales, right? But usually saying yes to something means saying no to something else. That is the principle of life. Saying yes to something usually means you are saying no to some things.

We are very good at defining what we want. We are not so good at clarifying what that means in terms of what we are saying no to. Okay?

So as it says over here, I won't read it exactly as it is, but really prioritizing your exact focus. Prioritizing doesn't mean you done do the others. That means begin the choice, maybe you spend 70 percent more here versus 30 percent there. That is what prioritizing means. It does not mean stop everything else and only do this one thing. No.

Once you do that, you clarify how you are going to do it. What is the method that is going to get you there, okay?

In the case of doubling your monthly sales, that could be, okay, you know what? I need to write more content. I keep going back to that example because I don't believe anybody else has given me a more interesting example.

What is the formula which is going to get you there, okay? For example, in our example of the paella, right, you know you want the paella. How are you going to get there? You need to cook it. Okay. You get what I'm saying? You start to understand there are steps which you need to do. There is the what you want to do, but now this is the how.

And most importantly, be very honest with yourself and ask yourself can I actually deliver on this? Okay, is it actionable? Okay. Do I actually have the resources to be able to enable me no actual little get there?

Then this is where you now really -- all these steps, you can sit down with a pen and a paper or you can sit down with a voice note, whatever it is, whatever way you prefer to plan, but these are things for you to think through. Okay? What would have to be true? These are like the ingredients. If I want the paella, that means I need rice for sure. There is no paella without rice, I'm 99 percent certain of that unless somebody just invented rice-less paella.

It will not fall from the sky. I need to do something. We talked in this case putting in place the tools or the resources or the systems to actually bring it to fruition. Okay?

And then how will you measure progress? This is step five of the business goals engine. How will you know it is working? How will you actually know? In the generic example of doubling your monthly sales, how will you know it is working? That is a fairly easy thing to measure in terms of, you can see if your sales are going up. Did it go up, is it going up 1 percent each month? Is it going up 1 percent each week? 10 percent? Whatever that is, that should tell you whether you are directionally doing the right things or if it is flat or worse if it is just going in the wrong direction. That is your signal to stop and either change the goal. Go back, take it back from the top. Take it back from step one. Change the goal or change the tactics.

Okay? You should constantly be checking. Then finally, actually put it into action. Like if there are no actual actions behind the goal, then it will just be a dream. It will remain just as an ambition or goal or dream. Clarifying who exactly is going to do what and when they are going to do it and how they are going to do it. Whether it is a written document or whether it is spoken, meaning you actually meet and talk about it. Even if you are a solopreneur. I am, I talk to myself a lot, talk to my phone. I can listen back and say this is what I want to do, but I do the best to be part of a small circle of peers who keep me honest. That is best, it is not always you and you alone. There is always, always, always a peer you can connect with.

All of these form -- my apologies, I am going to click back to this slide.

All these six form the business goals engine. If you do all these six, whatever your goal is, whatever your goal is, you should be able to bring it to fruition. And if the goal is wrong, somewhere around how you will know it is working, step five, you will go oh, this is not working. It will make you go back and redefine a new goal. Such that you will find making more goals that you can accomplish versus those that you can't, okay?

I sure do help this was helpful. My apologies, I am going to click back. I apologize for making you sit through this click-through. I sure do hope that was helpful.

We won't have a real world demonstration. What we are going to have is, we are going to go into questions and you are going to ask me all that. I ate into question time a lot, I know. Just before I do that, I know there is going to be a poll that is going to be launching which is the questions which were asked earlier. This is us now trying to understand did it help? Did this session help? Did the business goals engine help?

I'm going to pause and let you respond to this while my NDI colleagues are going to be taking over right after me.

But I just wanted to say thank you and let NDI come on while I pause.

>> ALEXIS JONES: Sounds good, Joanne. I just launched the poll. Again we will give everybody two minutes to complete it. I already see responses coming in.

If you do have questions for Joanne that you haven't already asked, please put them in the chat so that we can address them during this question and answer period. Nikki will be coming on camera to help navigate that. And then she will talk to you all a little bit about the business resources that we currently have available here at NDI. Please hang in and complete the poll because there are a few more things we will go over that might be helpful for you moving toward.

Give it about one more minute. I see half of our attendees have responded so far. Thank you all for taking time to do it.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: One last thing before I go. I see as we are responding to the questions I see that a number of us have moved from, whether it was a three to a four, seeing more fives more. This is good. If you find yourself still at 2 or 3, I want to tell you this. A lot of what was shared is practical stuff which the only way to fully get it is to actually do it. It is kind of like swimming. It is difficult to learn how to swim in a classroom. You actually need to get into the water and to actually, you know, start swimming. Then is what you start to get the hang of it. This is one of those very practical things also.

I encourage you, pick a goal, whatever goal you have for your business. Take it through these paces and see how it feels.

I am now officially going to go on mute and Nikki, I will let you or maybe it is Lexi take over.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Thanks, Joanne. As you are talking through this, obviously we are talking business and the goal setting for our business. But this can be so applicable to all aspects of our lives where we need to take these steps through to achieve various things that we are trying to do.

So I was also thinking of ways it could be incorporated.

So at the moment we don't have any questions. We have a comment from Cheryl who says thank you, great presentation. Oh, actually we do. I feel my big end goal will take two years. The steps to get there may have semi big goals.

Is it advantageous to practice this for both goals, for instance small program to practice before launching a school?

Did that make sense? Semi big goals. I think, yeah. Sorry if it is better to break it down.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Colleen, I love your question because it is the age old question of how big do I dream? You are spot-on. This is as applicable to the big, big, big end goals as it is to the smaller ones.

Here is the secret. Getting good -- because this is a muscle. Getting good at exercising this muscle of aligning the resources, you know, thinking outcomes and inputs, getting good at these muscles with the smaller goals actually helps you. By the time you get to the big goal you've already developed the muscle and you are actually a lot more capable of actually getting to a successful big goal versus not getting to a big goal successfully.

So small, start small is very, very helpful. But within your question, your question is a two in one. There is a start small element. Then usually big goals, you're right, usually have smaller big goals embedded within them.

So usually if the goal is really big like, I don't know, climate change -- that's a very big one, right? We are trying to bring the emissions down. There is a particular percentage. Is it we are trying to reduce the temperature, we don't need to go beyond 1.5 degrees? That is a very big goal with very many multiple activities taking place at the same time.

All of those are laddering up to the big one. So to your question, I mean, I'm not going to say you are doing climate change. Maybe you are. But no matter what you are doing, yes, that big one is best broken down into smaller ones also, which then all ladder up.

It is the same process. It is the same muscle, okay? But it is just that the bigger the goal the more thought, the more time, the more resources. But it is the exact same steps. I hope that's helpful.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Makes sense to me.

We have another comment. Thank you. So Pauline said she loves the muscle analogy. So that is good.

We hear the term muscle memory quite a lot, don't we, when we do different things and repeat it and have to really build that just like we would, back to if you were going to run a marathon, you wouldn't jump out and do it. You have to practice first to build yourself up for that. So that is also applicable here.

Yeah, just another thank you.

So we can come back. I can keep looking at the chat in case there are other questions. Right now I'll move on to tell you a little bit about what NDI does through the small business hub programs. Obviously bringing you wonderful speakers like Joanne and having different topics.

As Joanne did mention, in February we have a tax topic. Please join us for that, if that is something that you would find useful.

So one of the -- we have various different programs. Most of our programs are funded through grants. So at different times we may do different things. But this particular grant that we just recently got is called inclusive ventures, 21st century strategies for entrepreneurs with disabilities. That is actually a five-year program. It just started the first of October of this year.

To give you a little bit of information on what that is going to support, in case it resonates with you and you want to try to get in touch with us, we are working with state vocational rehabilitation agencies on starting with small business development, working with. Counselors in getting training and supporting those plans and we have disability service providers looking to expand or increase their support of self-employment ventures.

And then entrepreneur entrepreneurial organizations looking at more inclusive. If you are on here and you are an entrepreneurial support organization and don't know much yet about how to work with individuals with disabilities or what accommodations might look like, we are here to support you in that.

And then those small business owners and entrepreneurs with big ideas themselves with disabilities at any stage of the business lifecycle.

So if any of that, you are a counselor, you have a small business, you are an entrepreneurial support organization and you want to connect, please do.

So let's go to the next slide.

And so some of the other things that we do all of the time is we have a wonderful disability small business.org website where you can learn and get great information on how to start, build, and grow your businesses.

We have all of our webinars that we've done over the past several years archived there. So if you missed something or you go and see what topics there are and go and watch something that has been done before. And also we have some podcasts on there. We have links to great, great resources. We've got a few stories from people so that you can sort of get inspiration from the way people have started businesses themselves. And then we also have three years worth of our national convening, which entails multiple presentations on multiple topics and panels of small business owners that have their own stories to tell and discuss challenges and things.

Great wealth of information. You can also go there to get signed up for our monthly newsletter if you are not already, so you can keep abreast of everything we have going on and also connect with us that way as well.

Another project that we just started unfortunately is only relevant for those businesses that are based in Maryland. And if you are in kind of an innovation or tech-related industry. But to learn more about that you can click on this link. Obviously you don't have the slides right now, but you will be getting them. Anyone registered will get the slides. You can click on that link.

We also have a streaming television channel. Again, just full of wonderful different content for educational, for motivation, stories from business owners, all kind of things like that.

And then we partner with Verizon on their platform for small business support called small business digital ready. They offer business coaching, mentorship, all free of charge. They have some really good modules that you can go through. So you can register for that.

Then every sort of three months or so they open up an opportunity to apply for a $10,000 grant. If you have been in there and done a couple of modules with them. Definitely worth that.

Grants, we get this question all the time. Where can I find grants? That is one resource that gives you an opportunity to apply for one.

I did mention on our website you can join our mailing list. But the link is directly on here as well. So you can keep, stay in the know.

That next slide, I mentioned in February we've got the upcoming event on filing a tax return for your business and tax tips for self-employed individuals on February 12 from 2 to 3:30 Eastern Time.

Talibah is an amazing person, she has been working with us quite awhile and has a lot of experience and works wonderfully with folks who really need help getting experience with those business files.

Join us and register for that if you would like to. As you don't have the slides right now, Lexi in her experience is putting in all the different links I mentioned into the chat. You can go to the chat, click on it and register for that February webinar right now if you would like to, or join the mailing list from the chat right now.

All of those things, she's already put in there. Scroll through and sign up for any of those things that you would like to. As we said also, you will get the Power Point in an email follow-up from this. So don't worry if you can't copy and paste it all down. You'll get it in an email as well.

Okay! All right, I don't see any other questions on here. And so with that, just direct way to contact us. This is our small but mighty small business team of Lexi who you saw at the beginning and myself and Caroline and Ruth who you haven't seen but are very much here and present and able to support.

So this is how you would reach us. Our emails are on there. We do have another question. Is there a 100 percent disabled veteran owned business government contracting program?

There are specific priority contracting for veterans owned businesses. So if you want to reach out, we can help you get connected to some of those if you are not aware of those already.

Thanks for joining us. If you have any other questions, you can pop them in. Otherwise, thank you for joining us and please connect, stay in touch, and come and join us for other wonderful webinars.

Thanks, everyone!

(The webinar concluded at 3:30 p.m. EST.)

(Realtime captioner signing off.)

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