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00:01

Welcome to the brain space optimized podcast. This is the place where creative entrepreneurs get the insight and inspiration they need to become the best versions of themselves. I'm Haley and I run brain space optimized where I help establish small business owners execute on their goals while keeping their sanity intact. This week we're chatting with financial strategist IOD, Yvonne of lovely financials group, Ayana helps six and seven figure business owners understand their finances and then use that data to make strategic business decisions. We all know we're supposed to be looking at our numbers and tracking things like revenue, profit and cost of service. But most of us have at least some, if not a whole lot of holes in tracking these and other important data points, even though we know it helps us make better decisions and more money. It's a place that can cause a lot of anxiety with small business owners. In this episode, Ayana and I talked about how emotional junk like fear and shame can affect how we manage the finances of our business and she gives them access



01:00

Of how she was able to increase revenue for her business this year by 66%. Thanks to her regular review of her important metrics. She also shares some simple guidelines for how and what can you start tracking your numbers in the beginning. What I love most about Ayana is her down to earth attitude and her straightforward approach to managing business finances. Hopefully, this episode inspires you to update your data tracking processes, and start viewing your weekly metric of us as something that helps you make better business decisions and not just to something you have to do with all of that in mind. Here is my conversation with Ayana bond.



01:43

Welcome to the podcast. Thank you so much, Amy. It's great to be on the podcast. Yes, I'm so excited to have you on. So just for the listeners that are out there. I Anna has been working with me on my finances and within my business, but I



02:00

One of the awesome things about you is that you asked really good questions about the business as a whole and helps people kind of think about their money. And you know the piece of the pie that takes up their business but knowing that that's just a piece of the pie. So I know you and love you, but for all my guests who don't, can you give a short explanation of who you are and what you do? Yeah, well, first, thank you so much for that compliment. I pride myself in my really trying to understand the business owner exactly where they're at. But without further ado, I am I am Yvonne. I am the founder of lovely financials group. So we are a bookkeeping and financial strategy firm that helps six and seven figure business owners maximize their profits, as well as grow and sustainability. Yes, I love that. And I think it's interesting because people love talking about like, profit is like the happy word. Right? People love talking about that part of money. But I think the piece that you said like he loved meeting



03:00

As owners where they are, that's the part that is really important and that's the part that I think that might be the not almost see the opposite of the fun happy profit word but of life



03:13

requires some reflection and you know, understanding of where finances are so I wanted to have you on and talk a little bit about the the mindset and the thoughts and maybe some of the fears and and some of the hopes of the business owners that you work with. When you first meet people. Where are they when you say, you know, I meet people where they're at, I'm sure there's a variety of those places, but where are people when they normally start talking to you. So a lot of the times people feel that their situations are unique to them, and they are the only ones suffering or going through their anxiety about money. So in the web, so no matter if someone's on their first dollar or in their first or within six figures of their business, they're literally not looking at their faces.



04:00

answers a lot of the times, or they're not understanding their money, they look at their income around tax season and get a feel of what their taxable income is. But throughout the year, they're not looking at it. They're throwing spaghetti at the wall and seeing what sticks when it comes to what's going to make them income. But they're not understanding what helps them produce the most income. And I think what's so interesting, like you said, it's, the money part feels like something you should just know, right? Like you get a business. Sure, you might have to learn marketing, or you might have a skill that you're already selling. So maybe you don't need to learn that part. But at least to me, it's felt like I should just know how to how to manage the money.



04:46

Yeah, and a lot of times people feel that way. So I put the analogy of someone coming in to clean up your books as if someone's coming in to clean your house. So when you're having a cleaner come into your home



05:00

You're saying Okay, let me actually not put leave the place filthy. Let me clean up right so that that person can at least do their job and clean it more thoroughly. But when you're thinking of doing bookkeeping, a lot of times, we don't know the, or business owners don't know the first thing about cleaning up their finances. So that embarrassment of you not having your financials in order is so prevalent as well as you being so guarded on protecting your numbers and saying, Okay, this is a hot mess. I know no one else is like this. I feel so painful. But in reality, it's not taught. You know, financial literacy isn't taught a lot of times. And a lot of times I work with creatives or people who are really good at what they do, but the numbers aren't necessarily that air isn't exactly that area. But what I like to say I frame it into, okay, don't continue the negative talk, but say that's something that you're working on and



06:00

We are the guide to help you understand your numbers better and improve your business as overall. Yes, I love that I love the analogy of the house cleaner. I literally had a friend back in the day, who had house cleaner for like a month and then she stopped the service because she was like, I'm just so tired of cleaning up. And I'm like, why are you doing? But it's the same way like you said is we all think we're special individual snowflakes. And

we're like, certainly you haven't seen you know, going on in my books like this literally my job of course.



06:35

But you didn't say the two things you said were like fear and there's this piece of like shame or just like so much about how the person is managing money in their business without them being like, generous or kind with themselves and thinking like okay, obviously, I don't know this piece. How would I know this piece no one taught me.



06:56

So I just I wanted to ask you in what ways do those design



07:00

Fear around managing the money manifest like what are people doing that you can see that are the symptoms are triggers that I think it definitely starts as a child. A lot of times, I don't know about anyone else. But growing up, I didn't necessarily know our financial standing, but I knew not to ask. So it was hard to like with everyone else probably going up like that. That has been a topic of discussion. Talking about money is something that is so taboo. So when you go into your adulthood, you're expected to know your finances. know even though nobody's Exactly, yeah.



07:41

So that has been one that stood out because a lot of us grew up the same way. And yeah, talking about money growing up. So people will have grown up not talking about it, but feel like they should know what they're doing. Hmm, what are some of the things that you see people doing? Like I know, we talked before and you mentioned like people, not like



08:00

Looking at their numbers more, just not filing. Like there's a lot of avoidance behavior in writing, like when when people are kind of early in their journey to start figuring this stuff out. Right? A lot of times people don't think that they need to do their bookkeeping until they're making a profit in their business. But I say that you need to start doing your bookkeeping and knowing your numbers, as soon as you spend the first dollar on your

business venture, because you need to know what you're putting into it. You need to know what it's costing you to get it up and running. What is it costing you to keep it running every single month? What is actually coming in? And also what's the bottom line so that you can know what to pay yourself when that time comes. A lot of people are paying themselves or they are paying themselves but then their cash flow is negative and they're wondering why the bottom line which is profit isn't the same as what's in their bank account. There's so many like pieces that are involved that could like make up your specific situation.



09:00

But let's say you meet somebody, where do they start? Because like we just talked about, there's so many different ways this can go and so many different situations people could be in a payments off too much or not enough or not at all. Where do we start? So the very first thing that you need to do is get is look at your bank statements. First, actually separate your business financials from your personal financials. This way you know exactly what you're spending on for your business. Then I would say get on an accounting platform, it doesn't have to be so robust, but something that you can consistently go into every week or every other week so that you're tracking your numbers or if you're just starting out and you don't necessarily have a lot of transactions, start on a spreadsheet and see okay, what's going on, and what you're spending on in your business. Also, the first step is really just awareness of what's happening and, and being able to clearly put things in a place where you can see them



10:00

you'd mentioned something about tracking numbers. What kind of numbers? Should I be tracking asking for a friend? Yeah.



10:07

So I'm a big advocate on not only just tracking your income, but tracking the different ways you're earning money. Because if you're having one line item for your sales, but you have multiple offerings, you don't know which is performing the best. So when you separate those revenue streams by their respective offerings, then you know what's performing the best what you need to double down on, and also what you need to improve on. So for example, a lot of times when business owners work up to their first six figures, like I said, previously, they're throwing anything at the wall to see what sticks. So that's when you're able to test out those different revenue streams and see what is

resonating the most with your audience. So for example, if you have a service that is like 80%



11:00

That another service is like 5% of your income. It's like, okay, is this something that's sustainable? You have to ask yourself that and then you say, Okay, what can I do to just have this 80% of revenue service be the main thing that I can really focus on and get really stream on and how I offer it, unpack and put in some more value so that I could increase my rates? Yeah, just make more money. And that's like,



11:28

the way you said that just then there's the way that finance fits into your business overall, like how it helps you make decisions, right? You just said, you know, first of all identifying what is working when you have more than one offering, and then being able to use it as a tool to ask yourself more questions. Okay. If you know, we talked before about the 8020 rule, right? But if one thing is making up like 80% of your revenue, it's probably good idea to double down on that.



11:58

But at least now you can look and see what



12:00

That thing is because I think a lot of times we go based off of feeling or our memory, which is just so spotty, my memory spotty, but I like to pretend that it's not.



12:11

But yeah, like that's that that was a perfect example of what you just said of how understanding your numbers fits into running your business. I don't know about you, but I came from a corporate background. And I know you've got some experience like that too. But it just, if you were ever in corporate, there's a whole department for finance. And people are like turning out reports and talking about stuff you don't understand, well, at least me I'm speaking for myself. stuff that I don't understand. And so it felt like to me even in that environment, like when I went to go run my own business, I just had this

overall thought of like finances, something I do not understand. But it really is, like you said, as simple as, hey, this is a piece of data that's making you are helping you make decisions. Right? And that's a great segue into saying data takes a lot of the emotion out of the day to day of business.



13:00

So if you're thinking based on memory or thinking based off emotion, and ego, you're not going to get to the same place or get your goals in the same way as you would, which is literally just tracking the data. Yeah, absolutely. So you're tracking your data you're looking at, you know, all the pieces. You mentioned before, about what services are working, what's not, how much income is coming in, what else should we be looking at? Right? So then we get into any direct costs that deal with the offerings and that goes into your profit margins. You understanding, okay, if you're pricing a certain way, do you have direct costs that relate to your offering or have you able to deliver that offering so that at the end of the day, you can see okay, what does that profit margin and is it healthy in your terms for your business? So understanding the data of your conversion rates, how many leads says it take for you to book



14:00

clients to get to your ideal revenue goal. So instead of saying, Oh, I need, I need a ton of people in so that I can book this amount of clients, you can literally look at the rate that you close those leads or prospective clients, and just unemotionally say, Okay, I need eight people as leads so that I can close X amount of clients to get my revenue goal.



14:24

And then, also, if you're selling a product, you can say, Okay, what is my cells? What is my sales page conversion rate, or my checkout conversion rate, or my click through rate for my sales email so that I know how many people need to be on my list before I even launched my course or my product? So that way, you know, okay, this is my actual numbers. And now I have my goals. So piecing them together. I know what my audience should be this helping you understand what your marketing efforts should be. Yeah, exactly.



15:00

You get an idea of what the actual numbers are and where you need to go to find those numbers. Again, it all seems like as we're saying this out loud, it seems very like Well, duh. But also, I'm imagining that you probably come across lots of businesses that are not doing this correctly. Exactly, exactly. Yeah, none of them are looking at their metrics in the terms that we talked about. They think based on memory, and they think based on Okay, let's have an average of what I think is happening. But once we lay out the exact on these metrics, it helps us know where to go in their marketing efforts to reach their income goal, even looking at their payment processor on their sales pages, looking at the conversion rate through and that way, a lot of times business owners don't look at that, but once we once we work with them, it's like okay, yeah, this is just a numbers game.



15:57

plugin. This



16:01

And then business becomes fun. So how, how often are in what ways do you suggest people start looking at or collecting that data? That's a good question. So, up until recently, I was thinking, Okay, with business owners, they're hitting that six figure mark, and they want to get really detailed with their metrics. But you can even start way before then you can start now by tracking your leads. You know, you can start today, like how many people have you gotten on a phone with on a sales call? How many of those people have you booked, and then you can calculate your conversion rate from then. And you can start today by looking at your sales at your checkout rate for your sales pages. So it's literally starting from where you're at today. You don't have to have a robust like financial dashboard, but you can look at that every single week and see where you're at with your money with your data and your metrics. Yes, I love that idea.



17:00

Just do it once a week, use a spreadsheet, right? Google Sheets is free. Like it really doesn't need to be. And I think that's just that was just a huge thing. Since you and I've been working together, just explain all this. So simply, and it's had me just re framing how I assume this is supposed to go. Like, in my mind, this is a big complicated deal. I need to hire professional. This is like legit, and it is legit. But at the same time, it doesn't have to be this giant, robust, crazy thing. It's a matter of just putting the data in a place where I can find it and it's easy to read. And then, you know, being able to visit it regularly and update that data regularly. Right and you'll be surprised how much clarity you have by knowing

these numbers and how much your income can grow by knowing these numbers and being empowered by making the right decisions to push the trajectory trajectory for your business future. Yes, absolutely. How do you have any examples from



18:00

You know your time in business or in your life where you've had that transformation yourself, which I know you've seen it a lot in your clients, but had that transformation of clarity for yourself? Yeah, so I've decided this year on treating my business as if I was a client. And that means I'm walking it like I talk it.



18:22

And like tracking my data every single week. And with that, I've been able to increase my income by 66%. And I've been able to say, Okay, oh, so if I do track my money, it does grow. You know? Yes. So, so yeah. So let's back up. Let's back a little bit. Talk about those numbers. Yeah. So what metrics are you tracking? And obviously your businesses, not anyone else's. So you have different marketing plans, different setups, and all that, but what metrics are you tracking? So I have a product and I'm tracking the conversion rate for those so my trip wire so when someone's



19:00

signs up for my freebie I'm checking that opt in rate, how many eyeballs are on that opt in page versus how many actually sign up that I'm going into the tripwire once they see it also how many people buy. And that helps me understand how many people need to sign up for my offering so that I know that I'll get that tripwire sale. Another way that I'm tracking my metrics is by looking at the different leads that I'm getting. I'm getting on X amount of sales calls, and I'm closing this many people, then that helps me know roughly how many people actually get on a call with I'm also checking my sales cycle. So that means from when someone signs up to inquire about a service, how long how many days does it take for them to become a client. So what I've realized is my best clients close with me within 14 a seven to 14 days. Those are my ideal clients.



20:00

Because they know, almost immediately that they have the problem. They know I'm the solution, and they feel that I'm the right person to work with. So if it takes longer than that

14 days, that's when it's like, okay, they may like if they do sign on with me, I know that they're not necessarily the best clients for me. So that has been an eye opener and knowing like, how, how many touch points do I need to have with a prospective client? Also, how should I structure my discovery call? How should I structure the positioning for with my business? So On a side note, my conversion rate has decreased this year because I've repositioned my brand, but my website hasn't caught up with it. So that gave so with the data and me knowing the conversion rates of year after year, that helps me realize, okay, if my conversion rate is lower, what is it in my messaging that people aren't getting the getting the message? Yeah, and



21:00

And knowing that I'm the right fit for their specific problem. So yeah, using that data has been tremendous. And me like, not feeling bad about failures. You know, it's like, oh, yes, literally ended up in the data.



21:15

What I need to improve on so that's exactly and I think that that's a huge one that you just said is, there's something about a peace of mind to all of this that, you know, isn't captured really in, you know, whatever revenue or dollar numbers, but just, Hey, I don't feel like I'm failing at business. That's right. It's a win. Just being able to look at it and say, like, Oh, I'm making a pivot. And then to it, it gives you more insight into what you need to do next in your business, right. Like you just mentioned, your website needs to catch up. So that's probably a pretty significant project on on your near term horizon to figure that out, right. So it kind of gives you clarity in that way as well. Yeah, that's awesome. 66%



21:57

dang girl.



22:00

Now we're put a caveat that as I grew my business in, in my third year, I've grown from being a solo printer to having a team, that's that caveat and saying, Okay, I'm not doing the day to day, but my profit does take a hit, because now I have a team. But the business is so much more scalable, because I can add in more people to my like more, I could serve more people, and only work in my expertise. And that's really financial strategy and

getting really deep with these clients. And now all of the you know, data entry, and things like that is done by my team or automation. So now I can only focus on doing the stuff that I love to do. It also what I need to do to get more business, which is like marketing and copywriting, updating websites and things like that, based on me having a team so it's really calculated how it's like you have these different steps and having a business where do it by yourself. Get some automation



23:00

And then once you're once you've documented your processes, then you can figure if it's the right time to have a team or not. Yeah, I really love that. And I use the word calculated. And I feel like it's, especially with business owners, I have a lot of passion and have a lot of feelings of those of us that are coaches raising my hand. Like I have a lot of feels about a lot of things, but they're not incredibly useful when it comes to like business building a business strategy, right? They play a part of it. But the other piece that you know, you and your team bring in or just the necessary piece is this you know, data is understanding your data and doing in a way that doesn't feel scary, that doesn't feel overwhelming that doesn't make you feel like crap, but actually, you know, invigorates you and gives you the information that you need to make good decisions. What would you say to the business owner who's making six



24:00

figures but they feel like they are that unique, just snowflake of financial problems.



24:07

They're going to take their headphones out after this podcast episode, and they want to make some kind of change. What do you advise them to do first? Well, I'm going to say with love



24:20

that you're special, but you're not that special, and your problems.



24:26

Someone has gone through what you've gone through. And



24:31

I also want to let you know that you just have to face those numbers because whatever you don't get tracked, or whatever you don't track doesn't get managed. So you need to start tracking it so that you know exactly where you stand in your business. And you know exactly where you will be going. And the steps that will get you there and instead of just guessing throughout the business life, yes, that's just, you know, put on your big girl pants. Right? Figure it out.



25:00

It's scary, it's scary but you know needs to get done. And, you know, I'm big on if you're within your first six figures, you should be intimate with the numbers. You need to learn how to do them, dry them. And if it's really against, if you really feel stumped about it, definitely reach out to someone, even someone like me, to help you to guide you to get that first steps and like clean it up, help you understand it, help you understand those financial reports, help you understand how to actually do it on your own. Keep up with it consistently. And then once you do reset six figure mark and you know what's been working and it's like, okay, now you have these different moving pieces, and you're ready to outsource, then is the time to you know, hire someone else on your team to handle your books. But I think until then, use your resource or use your guide which is someone who can train you to do it on your own. And then take you know, have them take the reins once you really know



26:00

exactly what's working in your business.



26:06

Quick question for you, where do you want to be 90 days from now, if you're like many business owners, I know there is a goal or a project that is calling your name. It is vital to the growth of your business and your sense of accomplishment as an entrepreneur. But unfortunately, if you only get a chance to work on it, as you have time, which is almost never there's a good chance that 90 days from now, that project will still be on your to do list without a plan for careful implementation and a measured approach to experimenting, you'll be right where you are right now. Now, don't get me wrong. Taking on any new projects is a risk, but it's also a chance to discover a new opportunity and a chance to reach your goals. Together we can create the plan that turns risk into reward

and experimentation into vital learning. Not to mention you can officially take that project off of your to do list. The next 90 is my project management and co



27:00

package for small business owners who have a specific goal in mind. It's a custom approach to executing on your projects within a realistic and shame free framework delivered and weekly strategy calls and unlimited email support. At the end of 90 days, you have accomplished the goal that you set with your sanity intact found a rhythm for big picture project execution amongst daily tasks, feel comfortable editing and prioritizing competing commitments on your own and feel more confident in your ability to process stress and overwhelm. If you're ready to take the next 90 days and see massive forward progress towards your goal. I want to hear about your project, go to brain space optimize.com slash project and fill out the free project assessment form. I'll get back to you with two to three ideas for making that project happen and I'll let you know if you're a great fit for the next 90. Again, for your free project assessment go to brain space optimized comm slash project. Okay, back to the episode.



27:59

I know we're going to



28:00

transition into our lightning round of questions. Are you ready for this? Yes. Okay. Question number one, what are you reading right now? So I am a girl who loves both fiction and nonfiction. So in the morning I like to do some personal development. And I read nonfiction I've been reading on who I forgot the name of the author off the top of my head, but he is he has a book where I can learn exactly who is the right person to add to my team, and how to explicitly convey my expectations on that role, and better communicate with my team members once I do hire them. And as I said previously, and this year three have been nurturing my team and trying to be a better leader. So I've been reading a lot of those types of books. At night, I read Africa



29:00

Based fiction. So right now I'm reading arrow of God. That is the second book of the trilogy, trilogy, things fall apart.



29:10

I'm not sure if you heard of that book, but I'm really into African based novels. And so that that's what I'm reading. Yes. That's awesome. Okay, question number two.



29:23

If you could just make up a superpower based off of some weird stuff that you are good at, what would that superpower be?



29:34

The first thing that came to mind was like reading someone's mind, but in a way that isn't like intrusive. So for example, I've grown up as someone who's like, extremely empathetic, like if someone told me a story, I can literally put myself in that person's shoes and really feel not necessarily like the same feelings but like I couldn't really understand them and that might be listening.



30:00

Power. That's literally the first thing that came to mind. That's like the nicest way of like, I want to read people's mind, but like non non intrusive way, like, I want it to be nice, right?



30:12

Right. Like if someone's unable to like convey their feelings, maybe that's one that's a better way to say it. Because a lot of times people, it's hard to articulate what you're feeling a lot of times and I am empathetic in a way where I can understand if I were to have a superpower, I can just be that liaison between that person's inner feelings and who they need to communicate it with. Yeah, that's a good idea. I feel like I need one of those suits.



30:41

Nice. Okay. Question number three.



30:45

And I fully stole this from Chanel Allen over at a ZN courses, but she has a question that I met her for a networking event earlier this summer and I loved it's the zombie apocalypse. You're running. What



31:00

Three things you take with you to go out on your journey. I'm definitely my daughter



31:14

definitely her dad because he's more like physically savvy logic I have zero logic



31:22

like interpreting people's emotions



31:31

right can you survive actually?



31:41

Um What am I taking with me? Oh lord. This is funny but maybe a bra so that might be like flying a little plane and I'm comfortable.



31:52

Freaking



31:55

heard oh my gosh like not something I would have thought of



31:59

it



32:00

Lot of walking in



32:10

best answer.



32:18

Stay close to your husband.



32:20

Why is my brain like this? Why would I? Man, I'm literally crying.



32:27

But I did. I did want to ask one more question. Yeah. Tell me about a mission that you're really excited about, you know, in your business or just in your life right now, what's something that you're really excited about? Oh, such a good question. So, um, Lately, I've been really thinking about what my calling is. And I've just answered my calling that I'm that person that can help people understand their finances. without so much anxiety and so much shame.



33:01

So I'm excited to one. On one hand, I work with people who are established businesses. But on the other hand, I'm looking forward to creating like, you know, just free content to those who are just starting and my you know, little stuff so that people can at least start somewhere because a lot of times people don't have those resources for business owners and finances.



33:26

So stepping into my calling, of helping people with their business finances. That is another great answer to



33:35

you. I Anna, thank you so much for being on the podcast. There's so much great stuff to take out of this episode. Where can people find you online? Definitely on lovely financials.com. I am on Instagram at lovely financials. We also have a free Facebook group called the profitable ladies lounge. If you want to talk they're awesome. Awesome. We will live



34:00

To all of those things in the show notes, thank you so much for being on. Thank you.



34:08

A big thanks to our guests for being on the podcast this week. Thank you to our producer Melanie Scroggins and ticket details about anything we referenced in this episode. You can go to [brain space optimized.com slash podcast](https://brain.space/optimized.com/slash/podcast). We will see you in the next episode.