

Ep #69: Pep Talk: True Measures of Productivity



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With Your Host

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Hey designer, you're listening to episode 69. This is a pep talk day where I'm sharing how to measure actual productivity, and it's not in an app.

Welcome to *The Interior Design Business CEO*, the only show for designers who are ready to confidently run and grow their businesses without the stress and anxiety. If you're ready to develop a bigger vision for your interior design business, free up your time, and streamline your days for productivity and profit, you're in the right place. I'm Desi Creswell, an award-winning interior designer and certified life and business coach. I help interior designers just like you stop feeling overwhelmed so they can build profitable businesses they love to run. Are you ready to confidently lead your business, clients, and projects? Let's go.

Hello, designer. Welcome back to the podcast. It is Valentine's Day when you're listening to this, if you're listening to it the day that it came out. So happy Valentine's Day. It's a good time to check in with your business. Are you loving it right now? Seriously, are you? If you're not, why? It is totally possible to adore your business. But just like any relationship, it's going to take some dedicated focus and time and attention, especially on the back end.

When I ask you about loving your business, you might think about the love or the fun that you have for the creative projects and sourcing and customizing all the things. But in order to create more of that in your business with the clients that you really love working with and who have the budgets to support the creative work you want to do, you need to give your business back end regular time and attention and yes, love.

Loving working on your business as the CEO is going to create more love when you're working in the business as the designer. That's just how it works. Whether that's streamlining your process, updating your website with your latest work, consistently marketing your services, getting your finances or billing organized. These are all ways to show your business that you care. And when you show your business you care for it, it will care for you.

Now you're probably thinking, yes, Desi, I've heard this a million times. I've got to work on my business, not in my business all the time. That's what everyone says. And while you know that intellectually, creating time for these types of

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back end projects is really challenging for you. And if that is the case, I highly, highly recommend that you join us starting this Friday for To Do To Done.

To Do To Done is a five week coaching intensive where you're going to take one of these back end business boosting projects and take it from start to finish with my help, both from the planning techniques and from the mindset techniques where I'm going to coach you through the obstacles and how you get in your own way of completing something like this. Because the truth is, you don't need a ton of time. But what you do need is a plan for the project and how you're going to get it done. And also a plan for how you're going to manage yourself in the process.

Part of what we do in To Do To Done is that you learn the project breakdown process, which is how you take a business-boosting activity and break it down into 15 to 60 minute increments of time. Participants in To Do To Done last round were so surprised at how much progress they could actually make without having these huge blocks of time available or even just huge scads of time available in general.

So give your business, your relationship with your business, the gift of working on it. And I'm going to show you how. And if you can't join us for the first call, or any of the calls for that matter, you can definitely participate by following along with the replays. I had quite a few people do that last time and it worked really well for them.

And this round, I'm really excited because I've actually added a community element to the program. So that means whether you're joining me live for the calls or watching the replays, there are ways for you to interact with me and get support, whether that's on the live call or between sessions. And this is where you can get personalized feedback and coaching from me. So it's going to be an extra layer of value baked into the program.

The link is in the show notes. If you want to just type it in now, it's desiid.com/todo. And To Do To Done is only \$447 for that five week intensive, and that includes everything. So I really hope that you join us. It's going to be amazing and it would be the perfect Valentine's gift to your business.

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And with To Do To Done starting this Friday, I thought it would be fun to do an episode on productivity today. Specifically how we measure it or rather what would be a true measurement of productivity. There are lots of ways you can use technology to measure time spent on tasks. I definitely highly recommend that you track your time and there's lots of apps like Toggle and Harvest. And Mydoma, if any of you are Mydoma users, has added a time tracking element to their software as well.

So those are all great options, but let's face it, you could Google that and figure it out. But today, what I want to talk about is how you measure true productivity. The type of productivity that's going to lead to more profitability, more focus, and less time spent working away without seeing the return on your time investment.

Often when we, and I'm saying that we, as in our culture, when we think about productivity, we're thinking about it as the more we get done, the better. If I get more done, I'm more productive. And being productive is the most valuable thing I can do. And so I want to be very, very productive. And that means I want to do lots and lots of things.

And this puts us in a really difficult position because we keep seeking out more and more to do and how we can do it faster and longer and harder. And you can see why this puts you on a hamster wheel where you really have to keep running along and never really ending up anywhere. What I want to introduce to you today is this concept of true productivity. And I believe that true productivity, the most valuable way to measure productivity, is not by measuring how much you can accomplish in a day, just the sheer number of things. But true productivity is measured by the value and the results you create over time.

I want to break this down in the pep talk today. Let's talk about the value and the results first. If we think about traditional productivity, where you're trying to cross as many things off a list in a day as possible, you're missing out on an opportunity to create valuable results for you and your clients. And you're probably missing out on your life too, because you're just so darn busy.

Often those quick wins, those things you can just scratch right off, quick, check, consider it done, they don't create a lot of value in your business or in whatever

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other way you're trying to create value. And they don't contribute to needle-moving results. And when I say needle-moving results, I mean the things that you really want in your business. To be making more money. To be more profitable. To have the higher end clients. To have a team that is a well oiled machine, right?

We want to be talking about these types of results, not just what you're doing on a little scratch pad. We're going to be diving into this a lot in To Do To Done because when I help clients select a project to work on during the five week intensive, we don't want to do just to do. We do to create a valuable result, and in this case it's for your business. And when you create value in your business, you're also going to benefit the client.

If you're streamlining your back end in some way, you're going to increase your efficiency and your profitability. And then the client's going to benefit from that because it's going to be a better client experience. If you're getting your finances in order on the back end or creating a repeatable system for billing, that's going to be amazing for you in terms of your cash flow, how you get paid, and understanding your capacity.

And it's going to be amazing for your clients because when you increase your profitability and have a clear understanding of what your financial resources are, you're going to be able to hire support that is going to leave you less frazzled, less stretched thin in your business. And that's going to be better for your client because you're going to be able to show up more fully when you are with them.

And that's a little bit of a tangent, but I really do want you to see that when you work on your business, when you do these business boosting activities like we're doing in To Do To Done, they're definitely going to benefit your client. Often we think that if we work on the business, that's going to be somehow to the detriment of our clients, but it's really not the case.

Okay, let me direct us back. So when you say you want to be more productive, because I hear that from so, so many of you, I really am going to encourage you to start focusing not on the number of things you did, but the things you did that

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actually moved you closer to the result you want to create for yourself or your client. That is what really matters.

If you're spending a lot of time doing things that don't contribute to the overall result or the value you're creating in your business in a really meaningful way, you're just making yourself busy. You're not being truly productive. You're engaging in faux productivity. So get curious about this when you look at how you use your time in the next few days. Are you assessing your productivity based solely on how many things you could get done, regardless of the value of the actions? Or are you measuring true productivity based on how you contributed to effective results in your business?

Now I want to talk about the second part of how I suggest we measure true productivity, and that is value and results you create over time. The second part being over time. Productivity cannot be looked at solely in the context of a day or a few hours. We have to take a wider view. You're going to have days when you're so on it and boom, boom, boom, it's all lining up. It's happening. And then you're going to have those days where you just aren't.

You're going to have days, weeks, or even months when life happens and you have to adjust. Or you're going to have periods of time where client deadlines are going to overlap and they're going to get all squished together and business priorities will need to get shifted.

When you're just looking at productivity in the context of a day or a week, it doesn't give the full picture of how the hours or days add up to the valuable results you can create over time. You don't give yourself credit for how the puzzle comes together over time because you're so focused on just that one puzzle piece.

For example, one afternoon you might be totally distracted or you find yourself maybe procrastinating a little, it happens to everyone. Or maybe something major happens on a job site and you're out a day you plan to be in the office. We could look at that single afternoon or day and probably say, well, maybe it wasn't the most productive or you didn't do the things you were planning on doing. But

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if you zoom out and overall you're taking intentional action towards the results you want to create, you're absolutely being truly productive.

It's so easy to get discouraged by a rough day or week and think I'm not getting anything done. But this discouragement leads to those little quits and thoughts like, why bother planning if I'm just not going to get to it or I'm not going to follow through or something always comes up, right? And then we don't end up planning ever, because things are always going to be ebbing and flowing.

And so, of course, then when we kind of, what's that saying, throw the baby out with the bath water with the planning, then we end up going back to trying to grab those quick tasks that we talked about before that aren't necessarily going to move the needle. Judging your productivity based on just a couple of hours or a single day really undermines the true productivity that you desire, the one that's going to move your business forward and create that bigger vision that you have in mind.

When your view of productivity is zoomed out and you can look at it in terms of months or years, you can more easily see where and how you've moved that needle. And as I was saying before, this is something that To Do To Done clients in the previous round were just so pleasantly surprised with, that they didn't even need to work on the business boosting project every single day to get it done.

If they looked at it over that five week period of time, they could plan to spread it out and work it in with existing commitments and make intentional choices about their planning to make it happen. So on one day if you just measured, well, I didn't do anything on that project, sure, maybe that wasn't productive if we were looking at it in the traditional sense. But if you look at it over the course of time, if we give ourselves some space, we can really take something from being on that to do, want to do list and making it done.

So that's the other piece that I want you to consider this week. Is the timeframe in which you're measuring your output serving you, or would it benefit you to take a wider view, looking for the averages, versus the individual data points. When you begin to measure your productivity in terms of true productivity, not

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the faux productivity we've all been conditioned to really measure ourselves against, you are going to grow in leaps and bounds in what you can accomplish that is truly meaningful for you, your business, and your clients.

I would love to hear how this pep talk has shifted your view and perception of productivity. You can always send me a message, just reply to one of my emails or leave me a review wherever you listen to your podcasts. You can always let me know what you're loving about the show or what you want to hear more of.

All right, that's what I have for you as you go off and enjoy the rest of your week, keeping in mind how could shifting your measurement of productivity to a longer timeframe and focusing on value and results versus just doing support the big goals you have for your interior design business? I'll be back next Wednesday with a brand new topic. Until then, I'm wishing you a beautiful week. I'll talk to you in the next episode.

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Just click the link in the show notes to submit your review so I know how to get in touch. I can't wait to select a winner and it might be you. I'll talk to you next week.

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