

Ep #73: The Magic of a 90-Day Plan



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Desi Creswell

Ep #73: The Magic of a 90-Day Plan

Hey designer, you're listening to episode 73. In this one, I'm going to be talking about how 90 days could change everything in your interior design business if you know how to leverage these days. And I'm going to tell you how in today's episode,

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 has been quite the week here in my world, lots of different things happening. One of those things being my husband's birthday, and that was yesterday. My daughter and I were planning on making a sign for him, and then it turned into this full-on hot glue extravaganza crafting bonanza. Oh my gosh, it was so fun. Isn't there something just so satisfying about using a hot glue gun?

Anyways, are you with me? We're going to talk about the power of 90 days and how 90 days could really change everything to change the trajectory of where you're headed this year.

Before we dive in, I want to give a quick shout out for a brand new review that was posted for the podcast. It's titled a must listen. "I love Desi's podcast and always recommend it to fellow designers. The mix of life coaching and business advice is such a unique and helpful approach. I've also completed her To Do To Done workshop, which was amazingly helpful."

Thank you, thank you, thank you for the designer who wrote that review. I so appreciate it. It really, really helps me get the podcast in front of more designers so that I can help more of you. And it's also just delightful to hear how the podcast is having an impact. It really makes my day when I hear from you all.

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So let me just remind you that not only can you help make my day and help make the podcast more visible, you can also win a one-on-one coaching session with me when you leave a rating and review. So all you have to do is open up that podcast app and click the five stars, leave a quick review, and then submit a form that will be in the show notes. It's super quick, it's how I can know how to get in touch with you when I select another winner. It is my thank you for your contribution to helping this podcast grow.

Now I want to get into today's topic, which is all about the power of 90 days. Currently, I'm wrapping up the latest round of To Do To Done. That's my group program where you focus on starting and finishing a business-boosting project in just five weeks.

The way that it's structured is the first week I teach you the project breakdown process, which is really how you prioritize a specific project, understand the scope of your commitment, and then make a doable plan so that the remaining four weeks are implementing the project while getting coached on the planning and mindset obstacles that might be coming up for you during the execution phase. But you get all the planning done, so that way it's just time to hit play and you run with it.

Clients who've participated in To Do To Done, like the designer who left that amazing review, have been so surprised at how much they can accomplish when they have the tools to focus and get out of their own way mentally, and then also be really strategic with their time and planning. You can get so much done in a month the way that I teach you to break things down and make it doable.

As I thought about To Do To Done and bringing that to a format where I could deliver it to designers, what I really wanted was for it to be a showcase of a bite-sized version of how I plan in my own business and how I teach my clients to plan more globally in their own businesses. And the way I do that is in quarters, or three months, or 90 days at a time. It's all the same thing, right? Quarter, three months, 90 days, however you want to talk about it.

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But you could really do one project per month, right? So that's what we were doing in To Do To Done, where essentially you're completing a project in one month. So within a quarter, you could do one project per month, a total of three projects in 90 days.

And that's always my recommendation, just as a side note, is that you always constrain your focus to three new business projects or initiatives per 90 days. So three projects max. I think when you start going beyond that, your focus really starts to get scattered and you're not able to get that same level of traction and completion in closing those loops.

As we dive into the impact of 90 days in your business, I want you to consider how moving the ball forward on some of these things that you have been putting off or some of those things you know you should be doing, or want to do, to improve your interior design business. Whether that's to get those better projects, to ensure your pipeline is full, to be more profitable, to have more time outside of business.

Whatever those things are, think about how just even one project moving forward, coming to completion could really change everything. That change is going to be with you for the rest of your business. So it's not even just, oh, I get one thing done this month. It is the ripple effect of completing that project and the spark that that really ignites for future change and momentum towards your goals.

At the beginning of the year, you might have set a goal for yourself. And I've got lots of episodes on goal setting, so definitely go back to around the end of year, beginning of year time frames to check those out. But what I want you to think about is that a year is a long time when we have 12 months ahead of us. And often what happens, or what I see happen, is that we take that wide expanse of time and start to think thoughts like, I'll get to that later. Or when things slow down, I'll take care of it. Or I'll deal with that next month, right?

But later never comes. Later becomes a habit. And I talk about this extensively in my podcast episode called The Later Habit, which has been wildly popular. It's episode 35, so definitely check that out if you are resonating with that idea. But

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when we think, oh, I've got all this time ahead of me, we don't start taking action. But of course, time's going to continue to pass and then nothing's going to change.

Another thing I see happen is that designers will set a goal at the beginning of the year, but it's really just a project that you could complete and accomplish quickly. You don't need all year to do it, but it becomes this very big thing to tackle. When, if we take a little bit of time to plan it out, map it out, how it's going to work, you could do it with so much less mind drama and do it so much more quickly.

A great example of this might be something like Instagram or creating a marketing plan. Maybe you phrase your goal for the year as like, I want to be better at marketing. But we need to get more specific with it, and maybe that is just having some sort of regular touch points with potential referral partners, maybe on your Instagram or a newsletter. Whatever it is, it could just be a project that if we put it into a constrained period of time, like a 90 day plan, it could just be done and off of your mental to-do list. And it doesn't need to take you an entire year to figure it out, we can do it much more quickly.

Big goals that you set for your interior design business are not going to happen overnight. Achieving big goals happens one decision at a time. And decision-making is the foundation of quarterly planning and how you're going to take action in 90 day chunks of time.

During the planning of those 90 days, you're making decisions about which projects or initiatives you're going to focus on. You make decisions about how you'll approach those projects, what steps you need to take, who could help you and in what timeframe you'll take action. And then you make decisions about what you need to say no to so that you have space to prioritize this very important project in your business.

The decision-making that happens in quarterly planning, or planning in those 90 day chunks, is how you make your business happen on purpose. It's how you determine where you are three months from now. It's when you decide to run your business on purpose and proactively set the course for the coming months,

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which of course over time becomes the coming year and the coming years of your business, instead of letting it run on default or chance.

I work with my clients a lot on creating focus, calm and clarity in their days. And it is so much easier to have thoughts like, I know what to do, or this is my priority, or I'm going to make time for this, when the prep work of creating a solid plan for your 90 days is done in advance.

Having a plan for 90 days at a time works really well as a cadence for reviewing your past actions and results created, and then also looking ahead to make new decisions based on what you've learned. Of course, if you find a different increment of time works better for you, totally great. But I do want to share why I love a 90 day plan.

The first is that 90 days is enough time to accomplish a few projects that are going to really impact your business. You really can do quite a bit in this timeframe. And when you start to stack the results of 90 days at a time, the overall results in your business really start to compound.

The second reason I love a 90 day timeframe is that it is a bound timeframe. So it's not so much time, it's constrained. And it helps you stay focused, gain momentum and see your progress, right? When we're looking at a year-long goal, sometimes the things that we're going to achieve by the end of the year, it's going to seem like slow progress.

And so when we bring it down to 90 days, we're able to more easily wrap our heads around the progress we are making, the wins we are having, the success we are creating. And that is so motivating. It's a short enough time frame where you're really asked to get specific about what you're doing instead of staying in the land of vague. So you know what you're doing and how you're doing it and when you're doing it.

It's super clear, because of this bound timeframe, what's in and what's out. And then you can start measuring your progress, celebrating your success and seeing yourself succeed in a way that really builds you up and keeps you moving. The action begets more action. You get that ball in motion and it's easier to then keep it in motion.

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Another reason I love a 90 day plan is that “enough,” enough being in quotation marks, is clearly defined so that you can stop telling yourself, I should be doing “more,” again in quotation marks, right? Because you always could be doing more. And we love to tell ourselves that, but when we decide what’s happening in that 90 day timeframe, we’ve decided what enough is. You’ve already decided what you’re working on in those 90 days. So now you can know, hey, this is what’s happening. I’m not doing those other things.

And if there’s other projects that you want to complete, great. They can be noted for a future 90 day plan. It’s like a nice little shelf you get to set them on and know that you’re not going to forget those ideas, that that is coming, you have intention and purpose for it. And it’s also not happening right now.

Another reason I love a 90 day plan is that you always know what to work on and how it fits alongside your client delivery. Having a quarterly plan just makes daily planning and weekly planning so much easier because you have that reference point of where you want to be at the end of 90 days, and then you can work backwards and see how everything fits.

And of course, if it’s not fitting, that’s great to know because then you can adjust your plan, instead of just hoping it’s going to work out. And with the way that I teach you to break down projects into bite-sized mini results, as I call them, there’s literally just a list of mini results that you’ve created when you’ve made those decisions ahead of time in the planning process. And you just have to pluck those mini results off the list and you can start to plug them into where you have space or figure out how you’re making that space.

And that can fit alongside your client work, right? We don’t need to just shut things down for an entire week or go hide from clients in hopes that we can work on our business. Instead of just hoping that the time’s going to materialize or you’re kind of in that, I’m going to try and make time, you know you’re going to make time. You give yourself an opportunity to figure out when that time is happening.

As a side note, if daily planning is something that you struggle with, you feel like you always get to the end of the day and don’t know where the time has gone.

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You are busy, but it feels very foggy what just happened, or you just really want to be more intentional about how you're spending your time, definitely grab your copy of The Interior Designers Get It Done Daily Planner.

This is a completely free resource that I offer to you. You can go to desicreswell.com/planner and I'm going to give you my five top time-saving tips. And it gives you a template for planning out your day. Designers absolutely love it. So go grab that now, pause the episode, or otherwise make a plan to do that later.

The other thing I'll say about knowing what to work on and how it fits alongside your client delivery, is that you also know how whatever you're committing to in your 90-day plan is going to fit with all the other things that you have going on because you're not just a designer, you are a person out in the world. And so before you even commit to a final 90-day plan, you're always considering what else you have going on and taking that into account.

So I'll just say, it might not actually be three projects over the next 90 days. If you have things going on where maybe you're going to be out of town a lot or it's a period of high involvement with other life things, it might be less than three projects. And we want to make sure what you land on is realistic and doable.

And so within a 90-day timeframe, you'll have a pretty good idea of what's going to be happening for you in and out of work. And so you can also then make sure that realistic and doable is part of the planning process. It's how you get way more done, versus planning for too much and then not even getting started because you're overwhelmed or you've already just decided, well, that's not going to happen.

Okay, and then the last reason why I love a 90-day plan or 90-day period of time is that there's always space to adapt and pivot if and when you need that flexibility, or new opportunities or new information becomes available. If you're consistently checking in with what your business needs in these 90-day plans and looking at what you've learned as the business owner so that you can really proactively map out your next course of action, there's going to always be space to make new decisions.

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A 90-day plan is like a reminder to check in. Hey, how are things going? What does my business need? Where am I going in the next few months? And how can I set myself up for success today in the decisions I make? When you follow the 90-day planning process, you are going to make consistent progress toward your big picture business goals.

I know when you have a million little things or a million big things on that to-do list, it seems like the most effective use of your time is to just sit down and start doing things. But I want you to just trust me here, it is not the most effective use of your time. Sitting down and making a quarterly plan so you know what to do to know that you're on track to meet your goals is going to be the absolute best use of your time. And it's going to end up saving you time and a whole lot of extra mental strain in the long run.

It means that you're going to accomplish more than you realize you're capable of because you made a plan for it. And you're going to release that mental weight, like I said, of the nagging voice that tells you you should be working on your business more, because you're going to have a clear, focused plan to guide you and know that what you're doing is moving you in the direction of where you want to go.

And you're also not going to have that scattered feeling of, oh yeah, I wanted to do that. I wanted to do that. Oh, maybe I should do that. Right? It's just so chaotic in your brain when you don't make a plan and make those decisions. And that is a lot of time and energy wasted.

With that, I want to remind you, we are almost a quarter of the way through 2024. So my question to you for this week is, do you have a supportive plan that's going to move you in the direction of your goals over the next 90 days as we move into quarter two? And if not, there has never been a better time to get started with this planning.

We're headed into spring. It's a time of refresh, renewal, and we can really start to plant seeds that are going to sprout and you'll be able to harvest in your business. I know you want to end the year ahead of where you started. I know that you want to end the year feeling accomplished and proud of what you have

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created and where you have taken your interior design business this year. And I can help.

This is your official invitation to schedule your 90 in 90 coaching intensive with me. Now, why is it called 90 in 90? That is because together, in a 90 minute coaching intensive, we are going to plan your next 90 days. We're going to make those decisions. You're going to have my support to make decisions that are going to proactively guide your interior design business growth and success over the coming months.

These intensives are limited to only five designers who want to create a strategic plan with my support for the next quarter, so that they can get into action and start seeing results. The 90 in 90 coaching intensives are going to be completely tailored to you and your business. The coaching intensive is going to include guided prep session work to evaluate where you're at and where you want to go. And then that way we're going to be able to really dive in in that session right away.

And then you're going to have a 90 minute one-on-one strategy call with me where we'll map out your plan for the next 90 days. And just to be clear, you do not need to know what you're going to focus on over the next 90 days. Maybe you're really not sure what it is, or you have a million ideas and you don't know how to prioritize. I'm going to help you get focused on what needs to happen in the immediate future with your overall goals for the year in mind, and we can talk about all of that.

You're also going to learn my simple process, the project breakdown process that I mentioned earlier in the episode, so that you can make a doable plan to start taking action immediately. My goal for you with this intensive is for you to have laid your roadmap for the next 90 days, so that way there's just not that confusion or distraction around how you're going to grow your business and how you're going to create your time for it.

And on top of the guided prep work and the 90 minute coaching intensive, you're also going to have two weeks of email support so that you have me by

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your side if you feel stuck as you get going or you have questions about how to implement your plan. I'm just going to be an email away.

The link to sign up for your 90 in 90 coaching intensive is in the show notes. And all you have to do is click that link and select a time that works best for you. You'll get on my calendar, I'll send you the prep work and we are going to get started to make quarter two incredible for you.

If you have any questions about how the intensive works or if it's right for you, all you have to do is send me an email, desi@desiid.com, or shoot me a DM on Instagram. I'll reply to it and make sure that you have everything you need to make a decision that's right for you.

What I want you to remember though, is there's only five spots. So if you do want to take advantage of this special offer, do it now, don't wait on it. Make the decision to get started. 90 days can change everything and it will change everything.

I really want you to consider what could be possible for you in the coming months if you had a clear plan to focus your time and energy. And, of course, I would love to help you do that in a 90 in 90 coaching intensive. I'll be back next Wednesday with a brand new episode, as always. And until then, I'm wishing you a beautiful week.

Have you ever wished I could be your coach? If so, keep listening. For a limited time when you leave a rating and review for the podcast you'll be entered to win a one on one coaching session with me. I can answer your questions and coach you on your unique challenges.

All you have to do is scroll down to the bottom of your podcast app, tap the five stars and leave a review. Tell me your favorite episode, why you look forward to listening every week, or why another designer needs to check out the show. It won't take long, and as a thank you for leaving a rating and review you'll have the opportunity to win a private coaching session with me.

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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.

Thanks for joining me for this week's episode of *The Interior Design Business CEO*. If you want more tips, tools and strategies visit www.desicreswell.com. And if you're ready to take what you've learned on the podcast to the next level, I would love for you to check out my signature group coaching program, Out of Overwhelm.