

**Ep #75: Quarterly Review:
4 Questions for Maximum Impact**



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With Your Host

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Hey designer, you're listening to episode 75. In this episode I'm sharing four essential questions that you need to be asking yourself at the end of every quarter, whether you're new to quarterly planning or have some experience and are ready to level up the process so you can achieve bigger goals in your interior design business. This episode is diving into an essential and often overlooked part of achieving your goals, and that's how to regularly check in with yourself and check in with your business before you decide what to do next.

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. So glad to have you here, as always. As we round out March, which is the end of quarter one, I want to come back to what I touched on in episode 73. That was where I talked about why a 90-day timeframe for planning and executing on your goals works so well and why it's so effective and how it can really transform the ease and focus with which you achieve goals in your interior design business.

Today, we're taking a step back so that I can share a key ingredient to impactful quarterly planning. And I really encourage you to take what I'm sharing today and make it a regular part of your planning process. Before you set your projects and objectives for the next quarter, you need to ask yourself these questions.

This is going to be an episode you are going to want to reference again and again because the four questions I'm going to share with you today are going to be questions you want to return to and answer for yourself, not just now, but going forward as well.

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A little context as a reminder, if you haven't listened to episode 73, or even if you have listened to it, just to refresh your memory, the way that I set goals and plan in my business is that I set a yearly goal. What I always recommend is an income goal because income goals inform so much of what you offer, how you offer it, the pricing, your capacity and hours worked, all of that. That really helps me dial in my focus and it's the same for you and the designers I work with.

So I set that yearly goal, that income goal. And then each quarter or 90 days I identify one to three projects that I will implement in that timeframe that I anticipate, it's my hypothesis that those projects are going to move me closer to achieving the goal I have set for the entire year.

Sometimes at the beginning of the year, I'll have projects penciled in for the various quarters, and some quarters are going to be more defined than others. But regardless, every quarter is an opportunity to make new decisions. New decisions based on what I've learned from the actions I've taken and the results I've created in the past 90 days.

I start all of the quarterly planning, and of course the quarterly review process, in a Google document and then that way I have my 90 day plan set as a template with the questions I like to ask myself every quarter before I start planning the next quarter. The reflection and evaluation questions are always done before I make new commitments for the next 90 days.

I love to have this 90 day template so I can just copy and paste it, that way I'm not digging around for the questions or looking at a blank screen because it's always hard to start with a blank screen. And so this works really well for me. And you can always take the questions I'm going to be sharing today and create your own template.

In episode 73 where I share why working in 90 day increments work so well, one of the reasons is because the time frame gives you enough time to accomplish some needle-moving projects, and at the same time it's a short enough time span that you can be in a cycle of learning, adjusting and pivoting that works really well as new information or challenges arise.

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What I invite you to do is to use the questions I'm sharing here today to work with yourself and your own business on this cycle of learning, implementing and continuous progress. You'll use these questions to make new decisions for that quarterly plan that I'm inviting you to create as we move into quarter two.

And if you weren't aware of this, actually on my website you can find full transcripts of every individual episode of *The Interior Design Business CEO* podcast. So you could even go into that episode page and copy and paste the questions I'm going to share with you into a template so you have them at the ready, to not just answer now but also answer in the future.

Being strategic with planning is really how you take your business to the next level. First, you have to learn to manage your time on a daily basis and really control your day-to-day. As I'm always saying, controlling your day-to-day does not mean that nothing ever goes awry or you don't ever procrastinate or any of that, but it's making intentional decisions about how you spend your time.

And a quarterly planning and review process really is the next layer of this as you mature into being that interior design business CEO. Strategic planning as a way to achieve your big goal starts with looking in the rear view mirror before you set your next steps, and I really think it's an important part of this process.

So now that I've set the stage and reminded you of that other resource, episode 73, where I talk about the power of 90 days, let's dive into the four questions that I want you to be asking yourself at the end of every quarter. I'm also going to be sharing a little bit on why these questions are so important to give you some additional context and understanding of how these questions support you.

The first question is, what were my goals for the last 90 days? This is where you're going to get clear and specific so you know what you're evaluating. These are the goals that you decided to commit to and only the goals that you committed to. Not the things you hoped you'd get to or you thought maybe I'll try and get to that or the things you think you should be doing, but the things that you actually decided were priorities.

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You want to set your point of reference in this way and notice, do you remember what those goals were? And if not, why is that? Did you let other people's priorities overtake yours? Were you just not intentional or maybe you didn't make decisions about what you wanted that 90 days to bring? We want to have an understanding of what we're measuring and this is the first question to do that.

The second question that I want you to ask yourself is, what did I accomplish that I'm really proud of? And the follow-up question to that is, are there specific actions or habits that contributed to these results? This question really is an opportunity to celebrate. You are the boss of your business, so if you want someone to validate you and be proud of your accomplishments, it starts with you.

When thinking about what you're proud of, it can be way more than did you achieve what you set out to achieve in the last 90 days. It's much more robust and not so black and white as in did I do it or not do it or did I achieve it, did I not achieve it? It can be actions you took and you're so proud of yourself for showing up in that way. It can be lessons you learned that now inform what you're going to do next, and so you are farther along in your path.

It can be using your ingenuity to design new ways of approaching a challenge in your business. Or even how you had your own back when you had a fail. There is so much to be proud of, but you need to give yourself the opportunity to pause and see it. It feels really good to have these moments of celebration and pride in ourselves. And I'll also say it can feel really uncomfortable if you're not used to doing it.

And so if that does feel like, oh my gosh, that's making my skin crawl a little bit or I'm taking up too much space or who do I think I am, just know a lot of my clients have that experience. And this is an opportunity for you to practice taking up more space, even if it's just with yourself and allowing yourself to see your own pride.

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Not only that, when we feel better because of recognizing and validating ourselves, we are going to do better. We're going to be motivated to continue. And feeling good about yourself as a CEO is one of the best ways you can support yourself and your business.

No matter what, you are going to have results from the past 90 days. So you want to make sure what are the actions or habits that contributed to those results? Be clear on that because if there are things that you are proud of, if they contributed to the results that you feel proud of, you want to know what those are. You can keep doing them. You can layer them in. You can amplify them. You can look at what would be adjacent behaviors or habits that would be supportive. So much valuable information there.

The third question is, was there a gap between my goals and what actually happened? And the follow-up question being, considering what I have in my control, what might have contributed to this gap? This is where we're looking at where things maybe didn't go quite as well or as we had expected or hoped. We always want to ask this question after we explore why we're proud of ourselves.

So many of my clients, and I know I have struggled with this too, we're quick to see what we didn't do, what didn't go well, where we screwed up, right? But we need to see what we're doing well, and that makes it so much more easy to look at what didn't go so well or what didn't happen with compassion and curiosity.

So this question is an opportunity to look at where you wanted to be and where you currently are, really objectively. Reassess and take radical responsibility for whatever results you have because when you take ownership over these results, what you did or didn't do, or what you did or didn't achieve, you come from a place of empowerment to see how then you can influence outcomes in the future and make really proactive decisions going forward.

It is so, so important to ask this question with curiosity versus judgment. I know I talk about this all the time, but curiosity breeds insights. Judgment leads to shutdown. And it's not just shutting down from the lessons you could be learning

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and taking with so you don't continue to repeat patterns in the future, but judgment also shuts you down in terms of future actions.

If you're blaming and judging yourself for anything and everything that didn't happen, you're going to create more fear of failure, which of course is going to keep you in inaction, right? Versus learning to lean into the discomfort required to achieve big things, because sometimes even if we have the best laid plans, things might not go as we expected. And so we have to hold space for ourselves through curiosity and compassion in order to use those lessons for us and powerfully move forward.

When you have an understanding of the gap, you can then adjust your behaviors and actions and adjust your plan in the next 90 days. If there was a gap, really it's an opportunity to reset and decide how you're going to solve for the gap in the next quarter.

The fourth question that I want to share with you, and this is the last one, is one that helps you visualize your possibility, your success, and your inevitable achievement of the goal. The question is, imagine I have achieved my annual goal, what am I thinking or doing that's different from where I am today?

I saw this great little post on Instagram where it was like, what do you mean if I want something to be different, I have to make changes, right? And this like indignant look of this animal. I wish I could find it so I could post it and share it. But it's like, yeah, things have to be different. And that version of you who has achieved the goal, has completed those projects in the 90 days, they're different from who you are today.

It's a new version of you. Some of the things are the same, but for sure they're thinking and doing things differently. It might be a slight change in how you do things or think, or it might be a pretty radical one, I'm not sure. That'll be up for you to dig a little bit deeper. But I want you to use this question to look to your future self, the version of you who has achieved your goal and ask for the wisdom.

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Believe in your desired outcome and see what that version of you who has created those results has to share. See what this version of you is thinking about themselves as the owner of the business and what possibilities and solutions do they want you to see today? What would even they suggest as your next best step in the next 90 days?

I have other questions I ask myself as well as I'm reviewing and going through this process, but these are the four that I really wanted to highlight for you. And I'm going to recap them right now so you can jot them down or come back and jot them down if you're in the car.

Number one, what were my goals for the last 90 days? Number two, what did I accomplish that I'm really proud of? Are there specific actions or habits that contributed to these results? Number three, was there a gap between my goals and what actually happened? Considering what I have in my control, what might have contributed to this gap? And number four, imagine I have achieved my annual goal, what am I thinking or doing that's different from where I am today?

Once you've evaluated the past 90 days, and you can do this whether you had a 90-day plan before or not, then plan out the next quarter. Do these questions first, then make new decisions. Use what you learn through answering these questions for yourself and your business to make strategic decisions about how you move forward.

Set time aside right now or schedule it in your calendar for later this week to make these questions a priority. Answer these questions and then decide what you'll be focused on in the next 90 days to move you closer to your goals.

If you've lost track of your 2024 goals or just are feeling kind of fuzzy about where to focus your time and energy, I want you to know that I can help. For a very limited number of designers, only five total, I'm going to be offering 90 in 90 Coaching Intensives. This is going to be happening this spring so we can dive into quarter two with purpose and get in action.

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So why 90 in 90? Because in a 90-minute session, we are going to get you focused and we're going to create a doable plan to prioritize your actions and make space to up-level your business so that we ensure that three months from now, you are ahead of where you want to be.

Your 90 in 90 Coaching Intensive includes guided prep session work to evaluate where you're at and where you want to go. This is going to give us lots of focus so we can dive right in for our 90-minute one-on-one strategy call where we're going to map out the next 90 days together.

You're also going to learn a simple process to make this a doable plan so that you can create time for your business priorities alongside your client work. And then you're also going to have two weeks of email support so that you have me by your side if you ever feel stuck or have questions as you get started.

As I said, there's only five spots available. I'm actually not sure how many are left, I'm recording this way in advance of when this is going to air. So click the link in the show notes, see what's available, claim your spot, and decide that the next 90 days are going to be a turning point in the year if you haven't gotten started with this work, or it's going to be the rocket fuel to keep you moving forward with precision and momentum.

Ensuring I capture the lessons from previous actions to inform what I do next is a key ingredient to my business growth, and I know it's going to be the same for you. If you have any questions about the 90 in 90 Coaching Intensives, feel free to email me, desi@desiid.com or reply to one of my emails. Consider this your invitation to wrap up quarter one with clarity and use that to make your decisions for how you move forward in quarter two.

I'll be back next Wednesday with a brand new episode. And until then, I'm wishing you a beautiful week. I'll talk to you soon.

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

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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.

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.