

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 204: DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

How do you manage the uncertainty and slow times in your business?

Today I'm answering a question from listener Kristina. If you'd like to get your question answered, just call (567) 393-8272

Let's hear Kristina's question:

How do you handle uncertainty in your business? I have up months and down months.

First of all, recognize that this is the nature of business - all of our businesses are cyclical and have ups and downs depending on the season, time of month, weather, all kinds of reasons.

This is really important to understand - there is nothing wrong with your business if you have months that are much higher or lower than your average.

If you're feeling bad about this, you're going to waste your energy trying to fix this. Instead, let's reframe - think about this way - you're low months feel low because it's RELATIVE to your higher months. if you have your highest month ever...some month has to be lower than that. Some month has to be your lowest month. And that lowest month usually comes right before or right after you highest month. Why? Because you spent your time and energy on the launch or project that led to your best month.

With that in mind, that your business is always going to be cyclical, we have two sides to look at this: Making more money and managing the uncertainty. Let's first talk about how to deal with the uncertainty

**HOW DO YOU HANDLE THE UNCERTAINTY? MAKE IT LESS
UNCERTAIN!**

Track your numbers, year over year, so you can see your growth and you can see how this month USUALLY does. By tracking your numbers, after even just one year, you can start to spot slow times, busy times, and averages.

When I was talking about this in the Starship, someone mentioned that they often start the month with tons of jobs, so they think the month is going to be big, but then new jobs peter out. This happens over and over.

Well you know what? That's a pattern. That means that you get new jobs at the beginning of the month. So instead of assuming that a month is going to be big, assume it's going to be exactly the same. Plan your spending as if it's going to be a normal month, and then you can be delightfully surprised when it's above what you expected.

The first step in dealing with uncertainty is to TRACK what is actually happening, so you're not just going off your feelings (often, when people keep up with the monthly reviews in Map Your Business, they tell me that they're most surprised by how well the month went. It might have FELT awful, but the actual numbers and experiences were great) - so be sure you're looking at the reality of the month.

Then the next step is to handle your spending and budgeting accordingly. Plan your spending on the LOWEST month you have, not the BEST POSSIBLE CASE SCENARIO (this is where you get into trouble). So if you have make more money the first week of the month by you always make less money at the end of the month...don't spend that money as soon as it comes in! That goes for business spending or personal spending.

The third step is to look at your high and low months and make decisions with this information. Where do you make money? Where do you want to make more money?

You have two decisions to make more money in your business, when it comes to high months an low months:

- ★ Raise your slowest months - focus your effort on creating income in those months
- ★ Go all in on your highest months. Make them even bigger!

HOW SHOULD YOU DECIDE WHAT TO DO?

Be realistic - look at where your income actually comes from in those highest months. Look at your best months of 2017 - Is there a reason those months made more money? In my own business it's really obvious - a month where CreativeLive and my publisher pays royalties is going

to be higher than other months. That is a reason totally out of my control - I can't make them pay royalties in a different schedule. So I could focus on raising my base income - but those royalty months are always going to be higher. For you, it might be that when a publisher buys a pattern, or when you have a craft show, you're going to have a higher month. You can't spread that out, but what you can do is

Add more of those pay days into your lower months (ie, sell more patterns to publishers, do more craft shows)

OR

You can go all in and make that craft show even a bigger pay day - get a bigger space, bring more products, etc.

OR

you can increase your slow months by focusing on the income that comes from a different income stream - your own online store, for example.

That's why I say - you have to get clear on why these high months are high and then ask:

- ★ Do I want to go all in on this income stream to make it even higher?
- ★ Do you I want to look at my other income streams to increase them?

Maybe it's not an outside reason that your months are doing well, maybe your high months are because you launched something (this is why I recommend you doing a REAL launch for new products, every time) - well do you want to make the launches bigger and more successful? Or do you want to focus on creating consistent scale when you're not launching?

NEITHER ANSWER IS RIGHT! BOTH WILL INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS.

I find that, especially among people who really value stability, it's easy to default in spreading out their income, into making every month the same. But in doing this, they shy away from ever going all in launching something, they never have a real high, and do a big push that pushes their overall business to the next level. They're desire for stability and consistency leads to them not seeing major growth because they never go all in on making a good month a REALLY GOOD MONTH.

And here's the other thing - whatever your industry, some months are just always going to be slow. SO what do you want to do? Spend your energy improving those slow months or grow the months when people really are in the mood to buy?

One of my favorite examples of making the most out of slow months is Red Lobster's Lobsterfest. February was the slowest month for the restaurant, so they created Lobsterfest, which is their

way of doing a huge marketing blitz during their slowest month and creating all these promos to get people in the door. So if you want to improve your lowest month think: How could I create a Lobsterfest?

If you're still wondering - where should I spend my energy, lemme put on on my Bossy Pants - here's what I'd advise most new businesses. Get consistently making and listing your work for sale (nothing will sell if it's not in your shop). Then get consistent in your marketing (email list, then Instagram, then others). Once you're doing that regularly (3 or 4 months in?), do a LAUNCH. You can listen more to how to do a launch in [episode 162](#). Then focus on launching every other month or so, staying consistent in non-launch times. Then look back at your numbers - what month did best? What can you do to make it better in the future? What month did worst? Do you want to do something that month? Or spend that time resting, doing some admin stuff, planning for a bigger busy month?

I hope this helps you both make your business less uncertain and increase your overall sales! If don't know any of the numbers I talked about tracking, check out the class Pay Yourself - I walk you through figuring out your profit margin, your break even point and how to budget for what you want to earn. You can find it at TaraSwiger.com/pay

If you'd like me to answer your questions call (567) 393-8272

Thanks so much for listening and have a profitable and enthusiastic day!