

Should You Have a Waitlist When You're Booked Out_

Mon, Nov 28, 2022 10:04AM 14:07

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

booking, clients, amy, person, question, waitlist, demand, business, meant, calendar, project, weightless, work, months, scarcity, terms, legitimately, feel, offer, open



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You're listening to business dad Asri, the audio advice column for your online business. I'm Kirsty Fenton.



00:12

And I'm Amy Posner. We're talking bite sized episodes that solve real world problems with a no holds barred tell it like it is kind of approach.



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The question we have this week is this. I'm at a point in my business where I'm booking out months in advance yay. But also what now, I have quickly chucked up a waitlist to deal with new inquiries, but I'm a bit lost as to where to go from here. Ideally, I'd love to open my books once a quarter and fill my schedule with great clients, but not sure how to get to that point. How do I stay top of mind with people? Do I just open it up to everyone on my list? Or should I prioritize who gets first dibs? I would love to hear your ideas slash experience with waitlists. Amy, what say ye?



00:56

Oh, I see, this is a really interesting, meaty question. And I have to, you're gonna hate this. But I feel like this is you have more experience with this than I do. The only weightless that I have created really are for offers or things. I'm selling group programs, I've never had a client weightless per se, but I know you have. So



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So interestingly, well, I'm very happy to jump in. But interestingly, I haven't actually had a waitlist for client projects. But I'm very happy to explain why that is what I did instead. And this

may be helpful for this person, even just as thinking of it as another option for them moving forward. So let me jump in. But first, I want to say a huge congrats for booking out months in advance. It's so exciting when that starts happening in your business. So hooray, I hope you've celebrated appropriately, whatever that looks like for you. But in terms of the waitlist, so I also got to this stage, I guess, relatively quickly in my business where are starting to book out sort of three months in advance and six months and nine months and 12 months. But what I found was that, for me, having a wait list was just one more piece of admin that I didn't really want to manage, particularly when I had clients who were very happy to actually sign a proposal and pay a deposit for a project that was starting six 912 months later. So for me, my whitelist was never actually like a list of clients that I would then reach out to when I had a spot on my calendar become available. It was simply like people who were actually already legitimately locked in for a project that was happening months down the track. So I think what that meant was that I didn't have to sort of keep track of who was next in line, because people were already booked. And what it did also mean was that when people reached out to inquire about working together, I could quite legitimately say, you know, if they felt like a good fit, like, you know, I would love to work together. But I have to let you know, my next slot for this kind of project isn't until X date or x month, would you like to look at booking that in. So I think what that did was a couple of things that were I think benefits in that it meant that a lot of my clients were really likely to rebook me as soon as a project ended, because they knew that that wait time would probably align with the time they had before their next launch, for example. It also meant that it was, I guess, a really good indication that I could also start to do things like raise my prices, because of course, when demand outstrips supply, that means you have a scarce resource, and people will pay more for access to that resource. So did a few good things in my business, just in terms of you know, being able to honestly say like, I'm actually booked out for the next 910 1112 months. But if you want to work together, like let's lock it in now let's make it happen. So that's my experience with waitlist for sort of one to one client work. And I don't know, then Amy, if that sort of gave gave the insights you hoped it might but it might give another perspective about another path that this person could take.



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Well, yeah, it's interesting, actually. Because when I misspoke because I was saying, Well, you know, I know you had a waitlist, and I did not know that and apparently you didn't, but what I do remember is you being booked out way in advance, which is also something I've never done and it actually makes me quite uneasy the idea of doing it but what I'm wondering because we have two things here like okay, I'm at a point right where we're on booking booking out months in advance, put a waitlist together quickly, but where do I go from here and so and then they haven't what they'd ideally love to do open my books once a quarter and fill my schedule with great clients. So why why is that not available just right now is it? I mean, is it literally available that this person could just do that? Or? And this is like nervousness or fear about the unknown? Or is that not the way that this works? In your view? Do you know what I'm asking? I hope?



05:12

Yeah, it is interesting, because I feel like if they've pinpointed what they'd love to do, it's like, well, why, you know, what's, what's stopping them from doing that? And I suspect, and I could be way off base here. But just reading through the question, looking at the tone of this, I actually think it might be more a mindset thing, because the question here is like, how do I get

to that point? How do I stay top of mind with people, so it feels like, this person might be a bit anxious about the idea of how they can be busy doing the work, while also be present enough online for people to continually want to work with them want to jump at that chance when they have at once a quarter? Do you think that is a good, strong possibility? Or am I just?

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No, that's the bait I was leaving you with? So no, you're excellent. Because that's what I'm thinking. I'm thinking, Well, wait, like you are there? Really?

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I mean, because obviously, whoever this is, is Top of Mind with people, right? Otherwise, you wouldn't be booked out? Because that wouldn't happen. Right? They go to somebody else. It's like, well, note, to me Top of Mind means it's you I want to nobody else and I'm willing to wait or, or book out. And that says to me that this person is in demand. And so when you're in demand, that's when you can start being more demanding. And like you said, you can you know, it is an ideal time to raise your rates, if that's, you know, something that that needs to happen. But it's also, you know, money and time, right? They're the two things, but you're, you create a little bit of scarcity, which makes you which puts you more in demand. And so there's no reason I think it would be pretty, a pretty natural and easy transition, to start telling people, you know, here's what I'm going to be moving to in the new year. I'll open my books, whatever, it's going to be the first week of the month. Yeah. And I'll be filling up. I mean, if you start that, you know, if you started that sooner, rather than later, have people anticipate that they probably be clamoring and who knows, you might fill up who knows how much time? Well, I guess you'd only be filling up a quarter at a time. That seems to me actually more reasonable than being booked out so far. But that's my own thing about not wanting to be booked up. So I suspect that this person is afraid that if they do that everyone will go away. And I reckon that the opposite will happen. But it's that leap of faith, right? You've got to you know, you've got to, you got to let go and jump. There's only one way to find out. And hey, if you try it for a month, and it doesn't work, you know, you're already booked up anyway.

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I totally agree. But yes, I definitely think it is that leap of faith. And it's it as you say, when you're more in demand, you can start being more demanding. And I love that little nugget from you, Amy, it's one of your little post it note phrases again, we shouldn't, we shouldn't make a little business badassery post it note book with like, little Amy quotes on it to be a best seller. Anyway, I am digressing. So my sense is, you know what you want to do, and I think you should just do it, I think in terms of how to stay top of mind, you obviously already are top of mind, for a lot of people if you are booking out. So whatever you've been doing to this point has clearly been working, there are some things that I think you could perhaps try and fold into your processes that make this new way of booking yourself feel a little bit more comfortable. So for example, you know, depending on the kind of work you do, there may be an opportunity to offer, you know, more work or another project to a good client, when you get towards the end of a current project. So, you know, for me, obviously, with launch work, you know, that is possible, if they're launching, again, you know, another program or that same program, or

whatever it might be sometime soon. So that's a natural infamy in terms of looking at how I can optimize that funnel for the next time. But you know, if it is, you know, homepages that you're writing, for example, maybe there's an opportunity to talk about, okay, well, should we look at doing your about page, whatever that might look like, you know, if you're in some other kind of industry, you know, you will obviously have a sense of whether or not that will work for you. I also think sharing social proof from clients that you've recently finished working with or have worked with in the past, in the lead up to that week, or whatever it looks like that you are opening your calendar for new booking is a really good idea. Because it obviously shows that you are worth the money and you're worth the weight. And what I also like about this model of opening up the calendar, you know, once a quarter is that it does provide that sort of urgency or scarcity factor that usually makes people who are sort of on the fence more likely to actually take action. And while I'm rambling on because I know that I am my last thought here is that in regards to the question of Do I just open up to everyone on my list, or should I prioritize who gets first dibs? My question is for you, how much capacity do you have to manage the admin of that, because I think if you do choose option B and you prioritize who gets first dibs, that's a bit of a heavy lift for you in terms of organizing and remembering and sending out your calendar to people one by one. Whereas if you just open it up to everyone, it sort of makes it easy and fair, I think. As long as you let people know, you know, someone reaches out to book you in, I don't know, February, you're not opening your calendar up again until April, you know, just let them know. And to keep an eye out for that email, whenever it might come through with the calendar link. That's probably the approach I would take just because I feel like it's way less admin. And also, then you're not having to rely on someone actually locking something in before you go and offer that spot to the next person. It's just a case of sort of who's ready to go when the time is there. But what are your thoughts, Amy, now that I've just word vomited? stepaside?

 10:58

Well, it's interesting, this is, this is a rare one where I would do the opposite. Because I was thinking, I would absolutely prioritize who gets first dibs. And those would be the people I already know, that I like working with. And I would make that part of the offer. I mean, I would tell them, Look, this is what I'm doing. And you know, there, there are certain people like you who I really, you know, love working with want to help grow your business or whatever it is that you do. And so, you know, I'm opening this up to you first, because I think people would jump all over it. And it's funny, Kirstie because you said something about being more fair. And I'm thinking, I don't want it to be fair, I want to, I want what I want about that. And when I want or the clients I want to work with,

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I love that. Well, I love this, I love that we disagree, because I feel like we rarely do. And I think it's kind of cool when we when we do have different opinions. So there you go person listening, you have a think about what sort of resonates most for you and who your clients typically are, and whether you are still, you know, sometimes attracting clients who aren't the best fit, you know, what you're sort of screening processes for those clients and those sorts of things. Because I think all of that will factor into that decision about how you actually manage the new bookings that are coming through.



12:16

Yeah, and I think also, you know, to sort of wrap this up and round this out. You know, we both observed based on what you're asking here, that you're that you're in demand, and that I suspect I know Kirstie, correct me if this isn't fair to include you and but I think we both think that you're further along, and probably way more valuable than you realize. It just indicates and this is indicated to us by what what you're saying and how you're saying it. Is that fair to say? Can I include you in that?



12:52

Yes, you can. Yes. We agree on that point.



12:54

Okay, good. We agree on that point. So I would just consider like giving that some thought, like really looking at, you know, what is your expertise? Why are people coming to you, you know, why are you booked up? Because, you know, there are other people who who aren't booking anything, right. So obviously, you've got something here, that's, that's working. And so I would, you know, look at that and be Kirsty suggested earlier, celebrating, which I think is really important, actually, to celebrate your successes. But I would just encourage you to, you know, to, like take a little inventory of your expertise and what you offer because you've got something, you've got something really valuable here, you wouldn't be asking these questions. So that's my two cents for you.



13:36

Yep, let's wrap this episode up. Hopefully something in here has been helpful for you. If you have any follow up questions or a different question entirely about something related to running your online business, head on over to businessbadass.co/podcast where you'll find the question submission form ready and waiting for you.



13:54

Thanks for listening. We'll catch you next time.