EMERGENCY TURNAROUND CLINIC

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Your Products & Services Turnaround (Part 3)

Expediting Production

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Hello, and welcome. This is Naomi from IttyBiz, and you're listening to the Products and Services Turnaround track, part 3, called Expediting Production.

In this section, we're going to talk about how to bring new products and services up and ready to sell fast. We're not going to talk about cutting corners, though - we're just going to focus on the most efficient ways to bring whatever you're planning to create into reality with as little delay as possible.

Before we begin, I want to congratulate you on getting this far into the Products and Services Turnaround track. You're already halfway through this part of the class, and if you can get halfway, you can get all the way. I want you to remember that when it comes to building your ittybiz. You may not have the business you want yet, but you have built some of it so far. And if you can build some of it, you can build all of it. If you can get 20% of the way there, you can get 30%. And 40%, and 50%, all the way to the end. So remember that - you're already on the path. You can make it to the other side. Just keep working on it, every day.

Now, let's get started.

Ask Yourself, "Why Will It Take That Long?"

When it's time to create something new, it's not unusual to start to get a little paralyzed, feeling like it's going to take forever. Or we worry that we really won't have the time to create the things we need to create. It just seems like it will take way too long to make it happen.

When you're feeling this way, you need to stop, breathe, and ask yourself the question, "Why will it take so long?" I mean, literally, answer the question. Why?

You'll begin to think to yourself, "Well, I'll have to do this, and that, and the other thing, and then I'll have to set up this thing to sell it, and that thing to get it looking really good," and before you know it, you've turned that Brand New Thing of yours into a six-month process.

It doesn't have to be that way. Seriously. You can just get the damned thing done faster than you think, as long as you're willing to sacrifice your ideal of perfection. I don't mean you make an imperfect thing, I mean you simply stop telling yourself it has to be perfect.

When we're thinking we need something to be "perfect," most of the time we're thinking it needs to have all the cool things you want to put into it. The fancy cover on the ebook. The perfect microphone for flawless audio quality. The super-perfect payment system that will wow your friends and neighbors and show them that you're really and truly a professional.

That's all nice stuff to shoot for, but you need to remember that your customers don't want perfect. They don't need things perfect. They just need the damned thing done and ready to buy. We talked about this in the previous section, when we talked about "killing cool." Your product or service doesn't have to be the coolest thing ever. It does, however, need to be done. So we're going to take "killing cool" one step further and just focus on the most basic Version One you can get away with.

Essentially what we're talking about is asking yourself "Does all this crap have to really be done this way?" Most of the time we're making assumptions about what the customer demands. We think they demand a certain level of production quality, when a simple Word document made into a PDF will do.

We think they need a studio-quality audio recording, when all they really need is some type of audio they can listen to on the way to work. We assume they need a super-fancy scheduling system to book their consulting appointment when the quick-and-dirty free tool online will work just fine. (For the first three years of my consulting business, I scheduled every appointment via email. MYSELF.) We want to eventually sell the hat in six colours, so we think we need to wait till we've got all six to go live.

The bottom line is your customers need a problem solved or an outcome achieved, and they don't care how fancy it ends up looking. A friend of mine bought a $197 ebook - you heard that right - and the layout was just the basic Word template for a how-to manual, without a single bit of fancification. And he was happy with the purchase. It solved his problem, and he built a quarter-million dollar a year business out of it. Money well spent.

And that's what I want you to think about. What will make your buyers say "That was money well spent"? It's not the fancy stuff that makes them say that. It's the usefulness of what you sell.

So look at each part of your product or service creation process and ask yourself, "Do I really need to do it this way? Isn't there some way that will get me a good enough result but take a lot less time, even if it's not my first choice?"

This is not an easy question to answer, because it requires you to stop being precious about the way you do things. If it's taking too long, then you need to find a different way to do it. It may not make for a perfect or ideal Version One, but consider this - Version Zero isn't selling.

Ask Yourself, "What Would Speed It Up?"

So that brings us to our next question - "What would speed this up?" Assuming you've answered the first question, and you've figured out that instead of spending 20 hours making a perfect cover with a pretty picture, you'll spend 1 hour making a decent cover with pretty text, you're going to be at a point where you've made a few decisions but you're still not happy with the time it's taking.

Maybe you've decided to ditch the idea of studio recording and you've decided to just get a nice microphone to record with at home. But even these concessions have their own nefarious costs.

I fell for this one. I decided I was going to set up a portable recording studio, and I started spending hours and hours researching the PERFECT microphone. Because between you and me, I had decided that perfection, and only perfection, would do. And so I'm on Amazon.com, looking up reviews, comparing things in audio forums, asking questions on Twitter, and generally making the whole damned thing take too long.

Finally, I came to my senses and realized, this is stupid. I'm wasting time researching how to get maybe a 5% better recording, and in the meantime I'm not making recordings. No recordings mean no money, and the nanny isn't free. So I went back to Amazon and looked at microphone prices.

Some were $30. Some were $50. A lot were in the $80 range. After $100, things started going into the $700 to $1000 range. So I think to myself, "Ok, I'll pick something that's on the higher end of the price spectrum, right before it jumps up to the insane side. It won't be perfect, but it will be **good**." $100, and I have the microphone I'm recording on now. Figuring that out took 5 minutes. I wish I could have those 10 hours back, though.

I want you to keep those 10 hours, for every part of your creation process. Ask yourself "What could speed this process up if I did it a different way?" Maybe it means you change how one part is presented, like choosing a text cover for an ebook instead of a fancy picture one. Maybe it's paying someone to do something - or a part of something for you.

Transcripts are a good example. You can record audio, and then take forever to transcribe it, or you can type it out first and then read off that. Poof, instant transcript. A lot easier and faster than doing it the other way around. (You also don't screw up so much on the audio.) Or, maybe you were going to write an ebook, and you type pretty slowly. Could you just make some notes and record it and make an audio version instead? That way you replace the 100 hours it would take you to write the ebook with about 5 hours of messing around on audio.

The bottom line is that whatever you're doing, you could probably find a way to make it happen faster. It might cost you a bit of time up front, but save you time in the backend. It might cost you a little bit of money to outsource it, but you could make the money back by having more time to sell things. But always, always ask yourself what you can do to speed things up. Not "if you can speed things up," but "how."

Chances are 10 to 1 you're doing it in a way that can be sped up quite nicely. You're a smart person. You can figure it out. You have other resources you can draw upon to help share the work, too. But you don't find until you start looking. So start looking.

Ask Yourself, "What Could You Reuse?"

Finally, I want you to start asking yourself what you could reuse as you create your products and services. Reusability can save you an insane amount of time, and you need as much of it as you can get when you're in turnaround mode.

If you're creating content, like an ebook or a course, do you have existing content you can reuse as the base? Do you have old blog posts or website articles that can serve as the foundation? If you've been creating content for a while, you probably have a whole book on your site already. It's a lot faster to turn 500 word posts into 1200 word chapters than it is to start from scratch.

Or can you turn all those articles into an audio version? Or take an older audio program and turn it into a book? Or expand it into a 4-week class? Chances are high you're sitting on content that can be expanded, repurposed or reused to make new stuff fast.

This may be a little tougher with physical products, but there are a lot of parts of selling physical products that can be duplicated or done en masse. Your selling pages are effectively the same templates for all of your products, right? They should be. Pretty much any part of your customer communications can be automated, duplicated, or otherwise made shorter. You might have to get a little creative here, but you can save yourself a LOT of time.

If you're doing services or consulting, are there any existing systems or tools you can reuse? Can you reuse an old client questionnaire, or turn a piece of old content into a new questionnaire? Can you record coaching calls from other clients and use them as bonus material (with permission, of course?)

Or can you take a simple article you wrote about how to fix a specific problem and turn it into a consulting package? Maybe you wrote this really cool article about how to choose the right foods for a weight-loss diet. Well, turn it into a 1-hour consulting package where you talk people through the process, custom for them, and you've just invented a new service with almost zero time outlay.

That's where coaching and consulting can really pay off, even if you don't consider yourself a coach or consultant. If you wrote a book on financial planning, poof, you can do phone consults. You can leverage your years of experience on the phone with people who want the lessons you've learned delivered fast.

There's so much you can repurpose, you really don't need to start from scratch. You don't have to build a whole product or service from it, you can just make add-ons or bonuses out of them. If you're the financial planner, for example, think of your last ten

clients big screwups, record a 30-minute "Money Mistakes To Avoid" audio and stick it up for sale on your site. Then offer it as a bonus for people who book time with you. Rinse and repeat.

You have a whole lot more reusability built into your ittybiz than you think. Ask yourself "What can I reuse," and you'll save yourself a hell of a lot of time.

These three questions can save your sanity when you're creating new products and services - and possibly more important than that - can help you actually get the damn things done in time. So every time you get ready to create something new, you listen to this section of the class first. Deal? Deal.

Thanks for listening to part three of the Products and Services Turnaround track, called "Expediting Production." I'm Naomi from IttyBiz, and I'll talk to you very soon.