



tbd strategies

Three Critical Questions Most Entrepreneurs Never Ask

You've started your business. You've made great headway in getting customers to see the value in what you offer. You're asking yourself, "How do I scale this thing?" Before you get into the tactical execution, do yourself a favor. Now is the single best time to consider three critical questions that will allow you to scale your business in a way that is aligned with and serves the purpose of the business – instead of just growing to grow.

It's exciting to be poised to grow! You can see the path ahead of you – more impact, more customers, more visibility, more money. This is the point where many entrepreneurs do what they've always done – blaze ahead without looking around them. This is a great quality and it did get you this far. But I guarantee you, it won't get you where you're actually trying to go now that you've reached this point.

That's why I've put together these three questions **to help you** identify HOW to scale in the way that best serves your business and allows you to make decisions in alignment with what you actually long to execute.

Enjoy!

Taryn

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How to approach these questions:

- Set aside 30 minutes (10 minutes for each question). Feel free to move on to the next question as you feel ready – the point is to take the time to consider the meat in these questions. Don't settle for a superficial answer. Dig deeper.
- Treat this like an interview. You're sitting down with your business and asking it these questions. How would it answer? Make sure to put your business' name in the blank.
- Read the text under each question. This text is designed to help you with the exercise (I say this because I am famous for not reading or only half-reading things I don't think are important...and then having to go back later because I missed the point. This text is important!).
- If you feel tired or overwhelmed, stop the clock, mark where you stopped, and set a time to come back later. These are big questions. They aren't easy and they aren't supposed to be. But they do have answers and you will get them – sometimes these things just require a little patience.
- Don't give up! Fight for the substance – your business deserves it. The thought work you do here will serve you as you move forward.

1. Why does _____ (your business) exist?

Your business is not just a money-making operation. You started it with a specific purpose in mind, and you've put a lot of time, energy, sweat, and blood into serving that purpose.

You aside, let's look at the business itself as a separate entity. Don't answer this question with you in mind – answer it from the perspective of your business. What is your business' reason for getting up in the morning? What does it care about? What is it the most proud of?

2. Who does _____ (your business) exist to serve?

Without your customer, your business ceases to exist. Describe this person in as much detail as you can – how do they think? What is their problem? How does your business improve their lives? How does your business know this customer when it sees them?

3. *How is the work product executed?*

This may feel like a funny question. The work product is the good or service you offer your customers that they find value in. How you execute it is what defines the core values of your company. These values then allow you to make decisions for the company that are in alignment with why it exists and who it exists to serve.

Here's an example: A food company makes granola bars. Their values are Teamwork, Innovation, and Quality. How do these values describe HOW the work product is executed? At each shift handoff, the shift leads huddle to go over issues and wins in the previous shift. Each shift is required to set the next shift up for success. Team members are encouraged to solve problems on the line and identify creative solutions as well as contribute to new product ideas. Each employee understands that quality means the value that the customer is willing to pay for – this comes out in cleaning practices, addressing mistakes, and supporting other departments.

Now what?

Now that you understand why your business exists, who it exists to serve, and how the work product should be executed, you can consider the more exciting question: What are we poised to do right now?

Chances are, when you've assessed these questions, you will be able to see the opportunities in front of you with more clarity. Understanding this essential core of your business allows you to consider the environment you're in and see the true opportunities – things that will actually take your business where you want it to go – from the red herrings. The fact is that you have unlimited potential – and so does your business. But it exists for a specific purpose, and identifying the opportunities that are in line with that purpose will propel it forward in a much more powerful way than throwing yourself at every "opportunity" that arises.

When you start to solve this problem, there's so much more to consider. You'll want to think about:

- *Planning – how are you setting goals and objectives that carry you forward?*
- *Standard work and processes – how do these currently serve your business? You will need these as you grow!*

- Separation from your business – you need a life outside of your work. How are you making sure that you are not synonymous with your business?

That's why I work with my clients to establish standard work that supports clean processes and consistent results as well as a culture that will sustain them

If you'd like to learn more about how to solve this problem, email taryn@tbd-strategies.com to set up a call.

About Me:



Big companies can afford to have entire positions dedicated to continuous improvement, change management, and systems development, but small organizations are often just trying to turn tight corners without huge losses. I'm passionate about bringing these skills and perspectives to small businesses to help growth happen in a stable, scalable, and sustainable way that leaves everyone excited and hopeful about what is to come rather than dreading that next big push.