

# SETTING GUTSY GOALS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS



*Liza King*  
proactivator

proactivator pro-act-i-va-tor (prō-āk'tō-vā'tər) n. A substance that, when split, yields a fragment capable of activating another substance or process.

Living life deliberately

# Setting Gutsy Goals to Grow Your Business

Without goals, you can easily get caught up in the day-to-day tasks of running your business. You spend all your time trying to keep the ship afloat and this means you're not focused on navigation, so you aren't setting a course.

This may not be a problem now but eventually, you'll wake up and realize your business has stagnated and you feel bored, uninspired, and empty. You don't want that to happen!

To avoid it, you need to be setting goals regularly. These should be goals that bump up against your barriers, make you stretch out of your comfort zone, and give you a rush when you complete them.

## It's Time to Choose Your Next Growth Goal

Abby was ready to create a growth spurt in her business. She'd been coaching executives for years and now, she wanted to build more recurring income into her business.

A friend encouraged Abby to meditate on one question, "What is it that you want to create more of in the world and in your business?"

Dig deep into what you want and why you want it. If you could redesign your business from the ground up, what would that look like?

- Would you serve a different ideal client?
- Would you launch your own digital product line?
- Would you work part-time while you travel the world?

Abby realized that she wanted to build recurring income into her business so she could smooth out her income level since her daughters would be applying for college in the next two years.

She longed to help her girls with their tuition and expenses.

What do you want to create more of in the world around you?

What do you want to create more of in your business or brand?

Why is creating this important to you? How will it better your life or the life of someone else?

Creating a growth spurt in your business starts with setting a goal and seeing it through. Don't be afraid to set an ambitious goal and pursue it with courage and determination. Here are five amazing ways you could grow your business...

## Attend an Offline Networking Event

When you attend an offline event, you'll experience many business-boosting benefits including: meeting other business owners, getting exposed to new ideas, and finding inspiration in different locations.

But don't rush to grab a ticket to the next conference that you hear about. Take some time and intentionally plan your travel with these tips...

### Pick the Right Event

Not all events are created equally. If you're a digital business owner, then going to a conference designed for franchise owners isn't likely to help your business grow. You might be interested in the event and you may meet some fascinating people. But if you have no intention of starting a franchise business, then you're wasting your time.

Look for a conference or event that will be filled with like-minded business owners.

### Choose One that Fits Your Plans

Before you buy a ticket to a conference or retreat, think about how you plan to grow your business in the coming months and what type of event would benefit you the most right now.

### Think about the Tracks

Larger conferences often have multiple "tracks". Each track may be dedicated to a specific topic or a user level.

When there are multiple tracks, you can expect that there might be several sessions happening at the same time. This means you may need to choose which track to follow.

For example, a digital marketing conference might have a track dedicated to video advertising and another that's focused on Pinterest.

If you find a multi-track conference, consider which track would be most helpful for your business.

### Consider a Smaller Event

Don't pick an event based purely on size. A small retreat with less than eight other participants can be just as powerful and transformative as a huge conference filled with ten thousand attendees.

One of the advantages of smaller events is that you have more time to go deep and form connections with others.

With less noise, it's easier to get one-on-one time with wise mentors that can share their vast business experiences with you.

### Reach out to Past Attendees

If you're not sure about an event, get in touch with last year's attendees. Send a quick message on Facebook or Twitter, introducing yourself and ask if they can answer a few questions about their experience at the conference or retreat.

You might want to ask:

- What were your favorite sessions?
- How did this event impact your business?
- What do you wish you'd known before you'd gone?
- Would you recommend it to others?

If other attendees take the time to respond, thank them for their feedback. Then use their responses to guide you in making the best decision for your brand.

Attending a business conference or retreat can be a great way to grow your business.

But don't be solely focused on yourself during the event. Instead, look for ways that you can give value to others and support them on their business journey!

Consider	Share Your Thoughts
What events are you interested in attending?	
Where would you like to travel to? Is there a business conference or event nearby?	
What size event would you like to attend?	
Who do you know that might be going to the same event as you?	
What are you hoping to gain from attending this event?	

## Experiment with a Joint Venture

A joint venture is a project where two or more people have decided to work together. Maybe you have a business friend who's super smart when it comes to money and you're super smart when it comes to technology.

Together, you could do a webinar on working through money blocks. Your friend could do the presentation while you handle the technical set up and promotion. Joint ventures like this are a lot of fun and can be a terrific way to grow your business.

If you want to work with another online business owner, you might be wondering how you can get started with a joint venture. You can begin by following some of these tips...

### Pick Someone You Trust

Don't agree to joint venture with the first person who asks. Take your time and look for a digital business owner that has a good reputation in the community. She (or he) should be known for their integrity and excellent customer service.

If you find that this potential partner lacks character or doesn't seem to care about their customer service, don't move forward with the project. Their negative business image could easily become contagious!

### Look for Complementary Skills

It's easy to get excited when you find someone who you'd like to joint venture with. But not everyone will be a good match for you. Consider the potential partner's skill set and if it would complement yours.

Ideally, you'd want to work with someone that has a *different* skill set than you do. For example, partnering with another graphic designer might be fun, but who will write the copy or schedule the email messages? It's smart to partner with someone that has different interests and gifts.

## Start Small

Give yourself time to get to know your joint venture partner before you dive into a huge project.

Begin with a small project at first and watch your partner. How does she (or he) react to a setback or another negative event?

Do they keep their word and get the job done or make big promises only to disappear? Are they eager to serve their community or more interested in squeezing every dime from customers?

After your initial project is done, you'll have a lot of insight into who your partner is and how they prefer to do business. If they've proved to be trust-worthy and you want to tackle a bigger project together, then go for it!

## Decide How to Handle Money

If you and your JV partner are selling a product or service, the issue of money is going to come up.

You need to discuss who will be dealing with the money and how you'll divide the profits and expenses. Some platforms like [JV Zoo](#) make it easy by splitting the profits for you. Your share will be automatically deposited into your account.

You can also sign up for a business [PayPal](#) account and add a secondary user. This allows the secondary partner to monitor the account and see the balance.

The wonderful thing about a joint venture is that everyone benefits. You and your partner win because you can split the workload of creating a product or launching an event.

Your followers and subscribers win because they're introduced to another entrepreneur that's eager to serve them. So go ahead and reach out to someone you'd like to partner with!

### 15 Questions to Ask before Working with a Joint Venture Partner

- Do they have different interests and gifts?
- Are they known for their integrity?
- Do they offer friendly customer service in a timely manner?
- Are they interested in working with you? If so, why?
- Do they have a good reputation in their community?
- Are they eager to serve others or only interested in making a quick buck?
- Do they handle negative events and setbacks with grace and courage?
- Are they known to keep their word and get the job done?
- Do they have a good grasp of money or do they make foolish purchasing decisions?
- Are they someone you would trust in your business?
- Do they share your vision for the project?
- Are they positive and upbeat, always encouraging others?
- Do they share your values?

- Are they quick to share credit when they see success?
- Do you find yourself excited when thinking of this potential partnership?

## Hire a Coach to Guide You

Working with a business coach can be a great way to grow your business. It's particularly effective when you know what you want but need help charting a course. Maybe you want to write a book, launch a course, or finally start that podcast you've been dreaming of.

But there's no shortage of coaches to pick from. There are thousands you could hire and it's easy to get overwhelmed. Here are a few tips to help you sort through your options and find the best coach for your business...

### Focus on Your Goal

Think about what it is you really want to accomplish this summer. Look for a coach who specializes in that field or niche.

For example, if you want to write a book, then you want to find a coach that works with authors. A coach that works with podcasters might have some interesting ideas, but she won't be able to give you the same kind of support and insight that a book coach can.

### Consider the Coach's Personality

As you search for a coach, take time to read their entire website or blog. If possible, try to watch a few videos of the coach speaking or mentoring.

Pay attention to the coach's style and temperament. You might discover that a potential coach has an outlook you don't like or a style that you find irritating.

Some personality types just don't work well together, and you shouldn't feel bad about that. You're looking for a coach that you "click" with and that gets you.

You'll be spending a lot of time with your coach in the coming months, so don't force yourself to work with someone that's not a good fit.

### Look for Experience or Endorsements

You've found a coach who can help you accomplish your goals. You like her personality and you think you'd be a good match. But before you arrange that first call or meeting, take some time to research her.

Ideally, you want a coach that has experience and a good reputation in her community. If the coach you're looking at hasn't been in business long, ask around.

Are there trust-worthy leaders who are vouching for her? Maybe a prominent speaker recommended her or a popular podcaster interviewed her. These types of endorsements are usually a good sign.

### Pick a Coach that Won't Coddle You

The best coaches hold their clients accountable. That means if you promise to have your first chapter completed by the call next week, your coach is going to follow up. She'll ask if you've done it and want to know more if you haven't.

Keep in mind that a coach shouldn't berate or belittle you. But she will encourage you to dig deep and get brutally honest about why you're not making progress. Then she'll work with you to create a plan to overcome your internal obstacles.

A business coach can be a wonderful investment in your business. But remember, she's not a fairy godmother. You can't simply hire her and wish for your goal. Instead, be prepared to roll up your sleeves and get to work when she shows up.

What do you need a coach's help with? What goals would you like to reach with him or her?
Who are a few coaches you might want to work with?
Which coach do you connect with the most? which one do you feel like you "click" with?
What do other people say about this coach?
What is this coach's mentoring style? Will they hold you accountable?
Answer honestly: Will you be more focused and work faster with a coach on your side?
What questions or concerns do you want to bring up with your coach before you begin going after your goal?

## Sign Up for an Online Academy

If you're looking to grow your business, consider going back to school. There are plenty of virtual academies perfect for digital business owners. These schools offer you a great way to gain fresh skills, meet different people, and discover new insights to reach your goals!

### Know What You Need

Before you register for virtual classes, think about what you're looking for. A popular blogger has an excellent blogging academy. Most of his students go on to become well-known authors and speakers that make six figures or more a year.

However, if your goal is to become a virtual assistant by offering bookkeeping services, then a blogging academy isn't going to be the right fit. Yes, it might look exciting and fun. But if it takes you further from your goal, then it's not really a good match. It's just a shiny distraction.

## Look at Previous Attendees

Most academy creators are very good at marketing their schools. But don't rely on a sales page to sway your decision. If you're looking for real results, then you need to follow up with previous attendees.

Find them on social media and see where they are now. Consider messaging them to ask what results they've experienced since going to this online school. How has their business grown and changed after the academy experience? What do they wish they'd done differently?

## Think about Your Time

Some academies provide detailed modules with dozens of videos, worksheets, and homework for you to complete. A thorough academy could easily cost you 20+ hours of time each a week.

Do you have that much time to invest? Do you want to spend your time on these courses? If you do invest the time, what return do you expect from it? How will your business be bettered?

## Research Complaints

Since an online school can be pricey, it makes sense to do some research before you sign up. Go to a search engine like Google and type in: "(Academy Name) + Complaints" (without quotation marks).

Keep in mind that not every academy will have a 100% satisfaction rate. But if most of the graduates are saying they could have found the same information in a book, then it's probably a safe bet to skip this academy.

## Ask about Access

An online school may drip out material to you each week or month. Some of them may only allow you to access the current material for a specific amount of time before each lesson expires. This can be helpful because it provides a deadline for getting the work done.

But if you're a fast learner and have plenty of time to invest, ask the academy creator if they have a self-paced option. This would allow you to easily consume all of the content and get the work done quickly.

If you find an online academy that you like and you know it would help your business grow, then go for it. But don't spend all of your time just studying on your own. If possible, engage with other students in your class. These connections can be just as valuable as the education you're receiving!

What is the goal you're focused on right now?

Which online academy will help you reach that goal?

How much time will be required to go through the course?

What are some of the common complaints against the school?

How long will you have access to the materials for?

Will you get feedback from an instructor or your peers?

Who do you know that has previously attended? What was their experience like?

## Launch Your Own Podcast

According to statistics, podcasts are now more popular than talk radio. This is exciting news for digital business owners.

A good podcast can position you as a leader in your niche, grow your platform, and help you sell your products or services.

If you've wanted to start a podcast but keep putting it off, why not challenge yourself to get it done during this growth spurt? It doesn't have to be hard or complicated. Just follow these simple tips...

### Choose Your Topic & Audience

Ideally, you want your topic and audience to match up to your existing business. If you run a popular crafting blog, then starting a podcast about deep sea fishing isn't likely to help your business. It's just going to confuse your community.

But what if you're not sure you'll have enough material for a podcast? Maybe your niche is narrow like adult coloring.

You can solve this problem by broadening your focus just a little. Perhaps you could create a podcast around topics like creativity, art, and self-expression. These ideas are likely to interest your community while staying connected to your core business.

### Research Other Podcasts

Once you have your idea, you want to do some research. This will help you identify the most popular podcasts in your niche and what topics they're regularly covering.

You can start your research with the [iTunes Podcast Directory](#). This is the largest podcast directory but not the only one. You'll also want to explore the [Stitcher Directory](#) as well as the [podcast section](#) of iHeartRadio.

### Get the Software You Need

You don't have to drop hundreds of dollars on the latest audio programs in order to start podcasting. You can use a free, open-source tool like [Audacity](#).

You simply record your audio then export it as an MP3. Once you have the MP3, you can upload it anywhere.

If you want to be doing interviews or co-hosting a podcast with a friend, Audacity won't be the best fit. Instead, try to use Skype for your interviews or co-hosting. Then get [Pamela for Skype](#). It's low-cost software that allows you to record your Skype calls.

## Use a Headset

When you record audio on your computer or laptop, your device doesn't just pick up the sound of your voice.

It also captures the noise of the room around you. Ambient noises in the background that you don't normally notice may seem loud and distracting when you listen to your recording.

You can fix this problem by getting a headset with a microphone. You'll cut down on the ambient sounds, making it easier for your listeners to focus on your recording.

But you don't have to rush out and grab a top of the line headset. You can find plenty of options for under R200 at your local gadget stores.

As you're working on your podcast, don't put pressure on yourself to be perfect. Instead, focus on experimenting and having fun. If you do mess up, don't freak out. Take a deep breath, stop your recording, and start again. You can do this!

Consider	Share Your Thoughts
What topics would you discuss on your podcast?	
Who would be your target audience?	
What would you name your podcast?	
Are there already podcasts like yours available? How will yours stand out?	
Who would you like to interview on your podcast?	
Do you have the equipment needed to record podcast episodes?	

## Create an Action Plan

Now that you've had some time to think about different ways that you could kickstart a growth spurt in your business, it's time to design an action plan so you can get rolling! Here are three questions to ask yourself...

### What Will This Goal Look Like?

It's not enough to simply know what your goal is. You also have to decide how you'll bridge the gap from where you are to where you want to be.

In some situations, you may instinctively know the answer to this question or you may need guidance from your coach or mentor.

When Abby thought about recurring income, she thought of a membership site. She'd longed to start one several months ago.

She'd talked to clients and gotten some feedback on early ideas. Now it'd be easier to start one since she had a clear idea of what her clients would like to see.

### How Will It Change Your Business?

Creating a growth spurt in your business often means re-arranging things, even if just temporarily.

If you want to take on three new clients, you have to focus more of your time and attention on marketing your services. If you want to launch your first product, you have to budget time for product creation each week.

As Abby looked at her work obligations, she decided to spend three days a week coaching her clients and two days a week working on her membership site. This gave her the time to install the membership software she planned on using.

### When Will You Get It Done?

Once you have your goal and you've made room for it in your schedule, you need to decide on a deadline.

Some digital business owners prefer to make their deadlines public. A public deadline can motivate you to finish your project and launch on your chosen date.

Abby didn't want to set a public deadline but she knew she needed accountability. So, she shared her goal and her deadline with her mastermind, a small group of female entrepreneurs that she trusted.

Her mastermind community supported and encouraged her as she worked to launch her membership site.

Let's create your action plan right now...

What is your goal? What will it look like when you've achieved it?

How will this goal change your business? What will be different because of it?

When will you get it done? Who is holding you accountable?

## Invest in Tools to Support Your Growth

During a growth spurt in your business, you may discover that you need tools or resources you don't have.

This usually means that you'll want to invest in new software or programs so you can accomplish your goals. Here are a few tips to help you get the most value out of your purchases...

### Consider Carefully

It can be tempting to reach for the service or product with all the bells and whistles. For example, you need an autoresponder service so you can build a mailing list. Instead of considering [Aweber](#) or [GetResponse](#), you look at [InfusionSoft](#) or [Drip](#).

All of these companies are good ones, and each is likely to meet your needs. But InfusionSoft and Drip are both advanced and take longer to learn.

It's better to choose software that meets your needs now and gets the job done rather than options that are too advanced for you.

### Look for Free Trials

Almost every software or program company offers a free trial. Some companies offer free trials that last up to a month while others give you less time than that. Pay attention to the length of the trial period when you sign up.

You'll also want to build time into your schedule to use this tool. Plan to take a few hours one afternoon or evening to dive deep and learn as much as you can. This will give you an overview of what the software can do for you.

### Find Training Options

If you're going to invest in new tools for your business, there's probably going to be a learning curve. Anticipate this and begin searching for training options now.

Some companies offer free in-depth training to all of their customers as well as a dedicated customer-service team.

But other companies may not have as many resources to help their customers. If that's the case, you'll want to look around for a course or coach who can guide you through learning how to use your new tool.

### Try Several Tools

You don't have to use the first tool you come across and you don't have to like software simply because your business group recommended it. If a tool or service isn't the right fit for you, don't try to stick with it.

Instead, go to a search engine and type "[software name] + alternatives" without quotation marks. This should bring up a list of competitors and product that could be a better fit for your needs.

### Evaluate Your Options

Once you've had a chance to test-drive a few different tools, you'll need to make a purchasing decision. It can be helpful to ask yourself these four questions when you're making your choice:

- Which tool did I find easiest to use?
- Are any of these tools lacking a feature that's critical to my business?
- How do I feel about the company's customer support?
- Will I need to hire a coach or buy a course to get the most of out of this tool?

Investing in new tools to grow your business can be challenging. But don't settle for a service or software that isn't helping you. Keep searching for alternatives until you find the one that works best for your business.

Consider	Share Your Thoughts
What tools or software do I need to reach my goals?	
What are the top 3 recommendations when it comes to the tool or software?	
Which tools have free trials? How long do those trials last?	
Which software options have free or low-cost training I could use?	
Who do I know that could train me if I have a question about this software?	
Which tool do I find easiest to use?	

## Grow Together: Embrace a Business Community

A growth spurt can bring many positive changes to your business. It can help you focus, fill you with inspiration, and give you extra energy. But a growth spurt can also leave you lonely if you haven't surrounded yourself with other digital or mainstream business owners.

The best way to combat this isolation is to find other people intent on growing their businesses, too. Here are three ways to do that...

### Join a Mastermind Group

A mastermind is a group of people who want to achieve their goals together. Each member may have a different goal but they're all working toward bettering themselves together.

When it comes to a business mastermind, you want to find a tight-knit group of individuals who are highly focused.

It can be helpful if the group is led by an experienced business owner. This person will help keep the group on topic and can motivate members to continue pursuing their goals.

Some of the best masterminds feature a weekly check-in call. This is a time for members to share what they plan to accomplish over the next week as well as discuss any obstacles they're facing.

### Find an Accountability Partner

An accountability partner can be a wonderful relationship if you struggle with accomplishing your goals. Often, accountability partners will exchange goals with a plan to check-in on each other.

It can be helpful if you and your partner assign your goals deadlines. For example, you may say that you'll have your website updated by Friday.

Your partner can follow up with you on Friday to see if the task is completed. Knowing that your partner is going to ask can motivate you to get the job done.

You may want to look for an accountability partner who is working on similar projects. If you meet a digital business owner that you click with and she's also working on a podcast launch, you might be excellent accountability partners.

Since you're in the same place, you can help each other when one of you is struggling with a tech hurdle or needs feedback.

### Work with a Mentor

If you need one-on-one support, then you may want to consider working with a business mentor or coach. A coach won't tell you what to do or figure things out for you.

But she can help you clarify your goals and show you how to create an action plan to reach those goals.

Sometimes, you may choose to work with a business coach because she has a specialty that you need.

For example, if you're interested in doing webinars to grow your mailing list, you may want a coach who has a proven track-record of creating successful webinars. Her experience and advice would be invaluable to you.

A growth spurt doesn't mean you have to walk alone. There are plenty of ways you can build a community. Find other digital business owners you click with and plan to support each other so you can grow together.

Do you know of a good mastermind group you'd like to join? Have you asked friends for recommendations?

Who do you know that you'd love to become accountability partners with? Why do you want to partner with this person?

Is there a business mentor or coach you've been longing to work with? Have you scheduled a call with them?

