

## Ep #28: Is Your Business Future-Ready?



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**Tobi Fairley**

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## Ep #28: Is Your Business Future-Ready?

You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 28.

Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*, a show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth, and joy. Here is your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hello there, my friends. It is October. And like we talked about in the last episode, you know when I was all about the pumpkin and all that stuff? The pumpkin flavors and pumpkin foods and all of it, pumpkin scents. Yeah, well that means fall is here and now even October is here means that we're in the last quarter of 2018 as of like, three days ago. So how are your goals happening, coming along, progressing for 2018?

And don't tell me that you've thought about them but you aren't taking any action. Okay, well I know that a lot of you are going to tell me that, right? But did you know that the main difference that I find in people who get massive results and those who don't is that the ones with the results do not wait to take action ever. They literally don't hesitate on goals or ideas. They have the idea, they take the very first action immediately and they make a plan and stick to it for all their other steps after that first one.

So let me tell you, I am super glad you're here and that you're inspired by my podcast. I'm so, so glad about that and I am passionate about helping people just like you with their lives and their businesses, but I want to warn you about something. So I'm not even like, giving too much chitchat today, am I? I'm jumping right in and this is going to be a pretty long podcast, but this is a serious topic. I want to warn you, please don't just be a consumer of my information here on *The Design You Podcast* and never take real action.

Consuming information is passive action. It is not actual action. It never leads to results. You cannot just take classes and courses and listen to eight million podcasts and read 20 books a year and not take action. You've got to do the work. So I want you to start today. I want you to start right now because we talked about it in the last podcast about how you're

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going to finish strong for 2018 but you have to do the work. So there's your fourth quarter pep talk, friends. There it is.

Now, let's get to today's actual topic, which is about adapting your mindset and stepping into really some new opportunities to bring your business into the future in a successful way. So two episodes ago we were talking about future versus past thinking, then last episode we were talking about how to finish strong this year, and today I want to actually change the way you think about business in general.

So again, this is going to be a pretty long podcast. Settle in, buckle down, whatever you call it, get ready, put your feet up, get ready to take some notes because today's episode is yes, it's going to be a little longer but it's juicy and important stuff and I want to really get down to business here in this podcast and in your business.

So for all of you business owners on the podcast listening, whether you're interior designers or creatives or landscape designers or photographers or something else entirely, this content is for you. And even if you aren't a business owner or maybe you just aren't one yet but you will be one day, but maybe if you never will be, I still highly recommend that you hang on for this episode with me and listen because there is some mind-bending stuff in here that can change your financial position or that of someone you know and love.

So here's the situation: business changes at a crazy rapid pace every day. Well, really the world does, right? It's not just business, it's everything. And it's been really going fast for a while now, right? And keeps getting faster and faster in many ways. We've gone from the information age, which was the whole internet launch and social media and all that stuff we've been seeing for a while to what's now being called the data age, and they're saying the information age is over but now we're in the data age. How are they different?

Well, it's no longer just about the information but how to assimilate all the information or the data so that the customers who need it can find what

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they're looking for and get some kind of results from it. Because there's so much of it out there. The information age was just putting it all out there and now the data age is doing something with it. And this is true if you read articles about this it's like what the philosophies at Tesla and all these other places, they're taking all this information that they've been learning and they're doing something with it.

But so many people in business today including many of you, maybe specifically you right there that's listening - yes, I'm talking to you - you maybe haven't even caught up with the information age. You don't see the value in creating content and putting it online, and you don't fully understand the value that you bring to your customers or the problems you solve for them and you're afraid of doing things like building an online business or a scalable business model or a community of people or what's called a tribe of followers. And you really haven't even fully grasped social media and the way to use it to drive sales.

And that's partially because other than your highest end service, the one-to-one thing you do, you don't really even have anything else to sell people, right? And yeah, you've tried posting regularly on social media maybe but you've missed the idea that maybe the reason it hasn't worked for you, your social media or even selling your services is because you aren't really offering anything of real value or at least anything of real value to a specific group like you're talking to your tribe, a specific group of people with your unique point of view in a way that your customer or potential customer can't really get somewhere else already from someone else who's put it out there in a better or more usable way.

So do you get that? You're like, not giving them something of great value that they can immediately put into practice. So what are you to do? If you're here and you're like, yeah, I'm behind, I'm behind on the information age, I'm not creating content, I'm not helping a tribe of people, I don't really have a unique point of view, I'm just doing some service stuff every day like I've always done, I'm just being a designer or just being a landscaper or whatever it is that I do.

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Well, what are you to do? Well, first of all, you've got to do some major mindset work. There is so much fear amongst small business owners, especially female CEOs around what to do to adapt for the business of 2018 and beyond. You're afraid of how to do it, what to do, and even why you need to change. So many of you are stuck in the I just got into interior design or insert your profession here, photography, whatever it is, because it's fun. I just got into interior design because I love fabrics, I like making things beautiful, and it feels so good when my clients see their finished room and they're so happy with me and the big reveal.

And I don't want to do this scary new business stuff, I don't want to do all that, and you know what? That's even your opinion when you're not making any money. You're like, well yeah, I didn't charge enough and I really didn't even charge them, I gave them my costs on things because they weren't going to finish their room anyway and I really wanted it to look pretty and done so I could feel great when they praised me. And yeah, I'm not making any money but that's okay because this is really fun.

Well, here's what I want you to know: the age of business we're in now and we will be for the next decade or even beyond is going to separate the men from the boys. Or since my audience is mainly women, let's say the women from the girls. So if you are relating to the "But Tobi, I just want to make things pretty even if I'm not making any money," then it is time more than ever for you to realize that is a hobby and not a business. Business in 2018 and beyond is no longer about just being a service provider, especially at a loss or if you're not making any money. If that's what you're interested in, then just be okay with making maybe \$30,000, maybe \$40,000 a year if you're lucky, or maybe just really breaking even in your business and not paying yourself at all, which so many creatives do. Because that level of service that you're providing that's not that unique, that can be found other places, guess what? It's only worth the amount of money that you're being paid for today.

So one more like, "I just don't understand why I can't make more money at what I'm doing," have we ever stopped to think that that is the going rate for

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what we may be putting out into the world? There are so many people providing that level of service. There are no barriers to entry to get into the business. So just about anyone can set up shop and there's always going to be someone who is basically devaluing our industry, whatever industry you're in because they don't have the confidence to charge what they're worth so they're doing it cheaper than they should be and that's driving down the prices of what the rest of us can charge.

And you know what else? Companies like the big box stores and online sites are providing the same service for practically pennies or maybe it's not the same service, yeah, it's not apples to apples but the consumer doesn't know the difference. So for example, if you're an interior designer, did you know that Wayfair is offering what I would call design in a box? Or e-design for either \$79 or \$149 now I guess for a room. Do you want to do a room design for \$79 or \$149 because I don't?

But you know what? People will be happy with the results they get at that price. So if we're doing what I consider fairly basic interior design services, we've got a problem because how can we ever compete with that? And guess what else? Did you know - those of you who are designers, and if you're not a designer just let this sink in for a minute because this could be your industry too. Did you know that recently House Beautiful magazine shifted from having design and print media people running their social media accounts and their online presence, so like, their Instagram account? They stopped having their print media people that have always done it and have worked on the magazine too do that and they instead hired digital strategists and content creators.

And here's why: because they say that the future of design and their magazine and therefore their magazine's online presence is really speaking to today's consumer that doesn't just want an inspiring print magazine to take to their interior designer and have their designer implement it for them, which was what the model was in the past. Everybody would get their house beautiful and it was - a lot of designers subscribed to it but consumers would get it and they'd be like, oh here Tobi, I want this.

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That's not what's happening now. They're saying instead, millennials are their customer. So millennials want the information, the how to do it, they want to get their hands dirty and do it themselves. And this isn't the crafty old DIY stuff we can think about that was nightmarish that was a tier or 10 tiers down from what professionals could do back in the day. This is teaching these savvy young professionals, not design professionals, just professionals in general, business people, whatever they happen to be, teaching them now to do a legit design project on their own.

And this isn't to say get mad at House Beautiful, y'all, because this is going to be happening everywhere and basically it already is in our industry and others. So if you don't get in on teaching people, then you will just get replaced by the people who will.

So haven't you noticed anyway that your biggest competition these days is not other professionals in your industry but rather the consumer not hiring a professional at all? And when they do hire somebody, most of the time they don't want to pay a lot of money for help or they don't want to pay for the parts of the process that they don't need you for, that they can do on their own. They just want you to do parts of it, right? The consumer has changed.

And here's the thing to think about too: did you realize that the oldest of the millennials are now 35? So when we think millennial, for me I think like my nephew or something, but he's the generation after that. He's in college. We're not talking about some 17-year-old having to get their parent's permission to buy from you. Millennials are now legit business people in their own right and their behaviors around purchasing and hiring other professionals is completely different than the way most of us have been running our businesses. These people have made it all the way to 35, y'all. That is a grown up. That is a legit group of people that will soon outnumber a lot of the rest of us on the planet. They are going to be our audience and our consumers if they aren't already.

So if all of this weren't enough on the service side of business and you know, providing services, when you think about Wayfair and even Amazon

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and their ability to provide product, and not just junk product. It used to be just the cheap stuff. Now it's quality product and getting more so every day.

So the option that most of us have had in our businesses of making 60% or even 90% of our company's revenues through product sales, that's a window that is closing quicker by the moment. And again, this is not just the design industry. It's happening in other places too. I mean, basically it can be any industry and Amazon's taking over, right? Because companies like Amazon and Wayfair I suspect will be the first ones, they probably already have it in the works because they can afford to, to move into technology like AI, alternate reality, where they can show you that sofa you're searching online about and what it looks like in your living room if you just upload an image. They're like, oh yeah, here it is to scale in your living room.

And then they can also afford to have online live chats with their customers and have a design person on the other side, right? To help you make decisions. And this doesn't even mean - we can go well yeah, they would be horrible design assistants or associates. Not necessarily, y'all. That's what we want to think but here's the thing: Amazon can afford anything they want. If they want to have not mediocre design assistants but real knowledgeable trained people like you and me who can make more money working in a position like that then for ourselves, if they wanted to, they can employ that level of people to help their customer buy their interiors.

So if 60% to 90% of your revenues from selling furniture just evaporates overnight, which totally could happen and I believe it will before we know it and providing valuable service that isn't already being sold cheaper in 100 other places because we don't really know how to differentiate ours and we really don't see the value in ours, if that's where we're sitting right now then we will see a mass implosion of our own business and the business of many of our peers because they didn't adapt to a new way of thinking about business and a new way of working.

They didn't do the hard work of figuring out why they are even in this business, what they are truly passionate about providing, not in general like

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I'm passionate about interior design. That's not enough, y'all. What is it that you want to do to change people's lives? Something that truly solves their client specific problems. If you don't know that, then you haven't done that hard work and you really are on shaky ground. And I'm not trying to be Doomsday. I'll tell you in a minute why I think actually this is the time of more opportunity than ever.

But this is the harsh reality about where we are in many of our industries. So if you're not heeding these warning signs that are all over the place, I've just told you of about 10 of them if you're an interior designer - and listen, I don't have a secret. This isn't new information, friends. This is out there and it's already been happening and it's going to continue to happen and it's going to even happen in different ways that we can't even imagine yet.

But if you're not heeding these warnings, then you've got a problem. So many of you are ignoring it, right? You're hoping it won't happen. You're like, I don't know what to do about that so I'm just going to ride this wave as long as I can and then I guess I'll either just retire or get a different job. Well, that's not the answer either. Because again, you can leave this industry that you're in but it's happening to every industry because times have changed.

So if you're thinking, all that stuff Tobi, that's for big businesses and that doesn't apply to little old me, you're also wrong. It does. So let me tell you, the new way of working, the new customer outlook and buying habits, they're not going away. Facebook is even in on this, which of course they are, but do you realize they have a market place? Like a little tab on Facebook? I just read an article about this recently where that little area where they sell things is not just like a garage sale. It is huge and it makes tons of money.

And not only are they selling things like furniture but they're starting to connect service providers to the consumer there. But you better believe when they do that, it creates a commodity situation that again is impossible to compete with because people are going to want to pick the lowest cost provider, right?

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So it continues to drive our prices down. It's like competing on a shoestring budget over on Facebook to get the job. And that's not the way to have a business and a life that you love. But that's not our only option. We can do things differently, we can change to not have to go this path of becoming a commodity and having lower and lower and lower prices and revenues until we eventually - our business dies. So that's not what we want.

So here's what I want you to think about: if you want to stay ahead of this curve and I think that you should, and you certainly, I think, still have time to, then you must first decide that you are a serious business owner. If you are more of a hobbyist, if you're the I just like creating pretty spaces even if I don't make any money at it, then you likely won't stay the course of what I'm going to tell you to do and you likely won't do what it takes to become a thriving player in the future of your industry or all industry with the way the future looks already and is going to be looking even more so really soon.

But if you're like me and you are much more of an entrepreneur than just creative and you can't wait to do the hard work to revolutionize your business and your profits in the process, then it's time you start acting like the CEO that you are and make some significant changes first in your thinking and then in your offerings.

Now, if you are an interior designer, don't think you're isolated from any of this. I know I've said that already but I want to make this really clear. These changes are happening in every single industry, especially every single service industry on the planet from telecom to design industries to the publishing industry to the medical field. I mean, seriously, no one is immune because it is a change to the core of who customers are and how they buy. And technology and the internet definitely played a big role in that but it affects us all in every way, shape, form, or fashion, okay? Every business.

So what's an entrepreneur to do? Well, first of all, again, I'm not trying to be Doomsday. It's really the opposite. I think we have an opportunity right now to grow our companies more than ever if we are willing to get out of our comfort zone and to do things differently than we've done them before. I

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have never been more excited about my own company and our skyrocketing profits in all of my 20 years in business. This is the best year we've ever had because we have recurring monthly revenue that is basically all profit and it is life changing.

So here are the steps you need to know to go from where you are today to the future of business in 2019 and beyond. So number one is that mindset shift. But more than that, mindset and emotional wellbeing. I just heard Hilary Rushford, a fashion stylist who I follow and who does information products and other consulting kind of like I do but in the fashion industry - well, she comes from the fashion industry but she does things just like I do that help with business also.

So I heard her give a talk that was maybe about a year ago but she just put it out in the last month or so and she said that the number one thing that took her from literally broke to a seven-figure business is figuring out how to change her mindset and maximize her emotional health and her wellbeing. Y'all, I loved hearing this because it is exactly what happened in my life and what I learned.

I wasn't financially broke three years ago when I made a huge shift, and I've really been moving towards this whole thing for years, this wellness thing, but I had a little backtrack and I kind of was heading towards burnout again and so I finally made a bigger shift to this exact concept because I was not broke but I was burnt out literally and I was ready to give up what money I was making because the business model that I was still trying to make work and the thoughts that I was still thinking of I have to be all things to all people and I can't possibly say no to clients and not do everything they want and I can't possibly get off the proverbial treadmill and focus on one thing at a time, those thoughts and beliefs and habits were not sustainable.

So that was the epitome of poor mindset and poor emotional health and wellbeing, and she's exactly right. You have to change these things to move into a successful business in the future. So it's time that you see that there's a different way of doing business. One that doesn't kill you in the

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process. But to see that and to shift to a new way of working, you're going to first have to open your mind to any and every possibility for your business and explore them, not just dismiss them.

So what do I mean? Well, I recently had a designer considering my Design You coaching program. And you know, Design You is where I teach creative women CEOs how to transform their mindset as we were just talking about and their business model and their schedule for more health, wealth, and joy. So here's what the designer said to me when I was considering. She's like, well Tobi, can I seriously and should I seriously create scalable things like maybe a course or a class or something I sell online? Because just the other day, a big-time marketing guru in the design industry that no high-end designer would ever sell something like that.

And guess what? After I finished, first kind of enjoying this like, surreal moment, like, I was kind of smiling a huge smile to myself because I know the opposite is exactly true but was simultaneously super frustrated that this is still the mentality of people out there that are guiding others in their businesses in most industries, not just mine. So, after that, then I went on to explain to her how that advisor's opinion was just as much of a dinosaur as our old broken business model in interior design.

And again, it's not just our business that's broken. We have to think differently. We have to do things differently. And having a blanket statement that no high-end designer - hello, I'm a high-end designer with a really successful online course - but just thinking that that is not an option, like as a blanket general statement is where the problem lies.

So let me ask you this: do you see that the online information products business called the content marketing industry - let me tell you a little bit about it. It is estimated by Forbes to exceed \$267 billion by 2020. Marketing magazine said \$300 billion, okay, and they even said by 2019. So they think it's more aggressive and a little sooner. And other sources say it's going to be \$420 billion by 2021, y'all. Does that sound like a dying industry? No, but the interior design one in the traditional way is.

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And think about this: there will be 523 billion online sales in general including e-commerce and information products and all this stuff by 2020 according to Digital Commerce 360's website. So we're talking about hundreds of billions of dollars and we're saying, oh, is that a good idea? No, I don't think so. No high-end designers would ever do that.

Change your thinking, friends. I'm not saying you all have to have a course or a class. I'm just saying change your thinking. Video marketing alone was \$135 billion-dollar industry by the end of 2017. There is a reason that this year in 2018, Apple earmarked one billion dollars for creating streaming online content for its consumers and its tribe and PepsiCo, another huge company just launched a content creation department. This stuff is not going away.

And yes, those are huge companies, but the great thing about the internet is if you do what you do well, if you have great content and a unique point of view, even the smallest of businesses have the same opportunity to grow to be multi-million dollar powerhouses all based again on the value of their content and if it's in an area of expertise or what I think, even more important, an area that you are crazy about, like your passion project. Something that you literally wake up every day to share with the world.

And if you haven't noticed, Design You and this podcast, those are my passion projects. I cannot wait to deliver content to you all every single week. So what is most important that you know after you change your mindset, which was step number one and open your mind to the possibilities, don't take anything off the table until you've explored it yet. The new ways of working, not the old ones. Take some of those off the table.

But after you change your mindset, here's what I want you to do next. I want you to start to think about the conversation and the content that you can create in the online space. Because business is online, y'all. Even if you still have a one-on-one service, the future of business is in the online space. We're already there. We've been there.

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So number two, the thing I want you to do next is I want you to think about your content because here is the thing: people today want intelligent conversation. They want valuable content. They want to know things that stretch them. Doling out elementary information on say, interior design or gardening and some tips, that doesn't cut it any more. They can get that stuff everywhere for free. There is a reason that House Beautiful hired a digital strategist to head their online presence. And there is a reason they are giving free how-to valuable information every single week on their site, y'all.

So this requires you to figure out what you bring to the table that matters and create content around it, both free content and paid content to balance your cash flow and to keep you in a place where you only let the right clients that are really a fit ever make it to your high-end one-to-one services. So that's the second thing I want you to do.

The third thing I want you to do is I want you to think about this: social learning is a new buzzword for the online world. And it's the idea of combining something like online content, say an online course, that in and of itself if you're just taking it by yourself, even if the content is really valuable can seem kind of boring or isolated, okay? But when you create a situation for social learning, it's basically like you're creating a virtual watercooler discussion around the water cooler. So it's when you combine a social aspect to enhance and expand the conversation around your course content. And then you get an engaged audience and you start to build a community or a tribe.

So am I blowing your mind yet? Because this is not just thinking about what plants you're going to put in your client's backyard or what floral fabric you're going to put on your sofa, but this is what business looks like today, y'all. So on that note, let's go to number four and talk about this: it is no longer okay to just serve your buyers.

Today's consumer is super savvy. By the time they purchase from you, no matter what it is, one-on-one services or something online, they know all about you. They've been scouring your sites if you have them hopefully, if

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not, that's why they're not hiring you. But if they're hiring you, they've scoured your sites, they've checked out every social media platform, they've looked at you on Facebook, they've looked at your website, they've read articles about you. They are fully aware of you and your content and your offerings.

The smartest and most successful companies today and moving forward get that you don't just serve your buyers but you serve the whole community at large that's following you with free, legit, robust, valuable content for free. Did you hear the word free? And then when you do convert them, if you do convert them, they become very happy members, buying members of your tribe, but they don't have to become buyers to be in your tribe.

So here's the thing: your focus needs to be on your community as a whole whether they ever become buyers or not. And here is why: there's definitely some mindset work first that you're going to have to do before I tell you why because yeah, you're going to be like, what? You want me to give all my information away for free? Those of you who know me, I've been preaching this for years to give it away for free but there's even more reason now and this is the reason, okay?

So here's why: you have to give real valuable content that gets those people that have become your followers, so let's call them your tribe, that gets them results ahead of time before they even hire you for free so that they then want to hire you. And this concept works like a charm. The people that get this and do this well are making millions of dollars because they're creating so much good will, like, so much of a happy feeling for those people whether they ever become buyers or not, that their reputation grows, the trust factor grows, the loyalty of people being part of their tribe grows because you're taking care of those people first. You're not just asking for their money. You're not going in with a handout.

So those people become your customers after the good will. And they start to see that if your free content is that good, then your paid content must be even better. But here's the thing: if they never ever buy from you, they

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never do, if they just consume your free content, they still are valuable members of your community because so many of those people that still don't believe they can afford you for whatever reason or they just haven't taken the leap are some of the most active people online in your communities and in your social media, carrying on conversations, participating, telling other people about your business and your brand.

So please don't have a scarcity mindset when it comes to giving a lot of information away for free because it is part of the new business of 2018, 2019 and beyond. You must do this. This is what the consumer, the millennial, other people, even me - I'm not a millennial. I'm 46 and I still expect to go get free valuable information online from the gurus that I follow.

And when I do and when I get great information, I buy every single time. Every time, y'all. So this stuff works. Don't have a scarcity mindset around it. But you do have to realize that if you're just doing basic work and you're not creating a lot of valuable content, that you're going to get freaked out about this because you're like, if I give everything I have for free then what am I going to do? But if you learn what it is you're passionate about and you start creating a lot of content like I do, it never scares you to give stuff away for free because you know there is so much more where that came from.

And then number five, an important key component of a new and updated business strategy, no matter what your industry is realizing that live interaction and community are far more important than you just posting something to social media. So live stream, talking to people in real time, not just them watching a video but live interaction and community.

So this is why Facebook live is working like a charm. This is why IGTV is around. This is why Insta stories have gone crazy because people are having live streaming interaction, they're talking to their consumers, their consumers can somehow respond to them, and they feel like they are connected in a totally different way. It gives a face to your company and you know what, it gives a soul to your company. It builds relationships with

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your buyers and potential buyers. Live streaming, live interaction with your community builds buyers long term and creates lifelong fans.

So this isn't just another way to look at social media, y'all. And it's not when and how often you should post your not that valuable information that you were posting before. If you've been posting some mediocre information that doesn't really get people results ahead of time then no wonder it hasn't worked for you. So a lot of you have said to me like, Tobi, I try to post every day on social media like on Instagram but nobody even responds.

Well, you got to look at what you're posting. Is it changing their lives? Did you give them a how to? Did you have them a downloadable worksheet that helped them pick their paint before they even hired you? Like, what are you doing? If you're a photographer, did you tell them if they're going to be do it yourself? You might as well tell them how to do it themselves. As opposed to begrudging these people for becoming our competition, why not make money off the opportunity to help them do a better job, y'all? It makes so much sense.

So again, this is not just another way of when or how to post on social media. It's showing up for your community with live stream and with results and with great content and truly connecting with them. It's two-way communication and yeah, partly through social media but partly through maybe other live streamed events or webinars or some way that through digital marketing and technology, you're connecting with and building a loyal tribe of like-minded people who truly benefit from your ideas and your business.

And lastly, because you're probably already overwhelmed with all of these ideas and that's okay because you might not have heard of some of these yet. I am very much a progressive thinker and a researcher and a studier and a futurist. You might have to listen to this podcast multiple times but that's okay but here's the thing, here's tip number six. It's important now in 2018, 2019 and beyond that we stop trying to sell our services by focusing on the features of our offerings and of our business.

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What do I mean by that? I mean that no one really cares if it's a one-on-one service or if it's a DIY course or if it's a series of webinars or if you're going to show up on your computer and video conference with them live. They do not care about the features. Why? Because here's what they care about: instead of the features, they care about the results. They want to know how and why you are the solution to their problems. And otherwise, if they don't think you are the solution to their problems, then they probably won't care about the thing you're selling.

So if you're like, I can't even get anybody to take a look, it's probably because you're talking about the features and you're like, do you want to book a design consultation with me and they're like no. But if you were to say, would you like me to solve your biggest problem for you, which is X? Then they're going to be like, well heck yeah, tell me more.

So do you start to see that if you're selling the features, they're going to just keep going because there's eight billion people selling features online. But if they can start to realize not only what their problem is but that you're the solution for it, that is a whole different story. This is the very reason if you're not converting sales, including with your high-end services, if they're not selling, this is the reason.

And a lot of you tell me, you know, well Tobi, my stuff's not selling and I even tried an e-book or I tried a course but it didn't sell. Well, you can't fathom how selling something that you tried once and maybe it wasn't of great value but likely you were selling the features of it. That's what you were telling people about. But you just can't fathom how selling some low-priced e-book can transform your business, but I'm telling you that it can. Even if it's free it can.

If you are marketing it on the features alone, it doesn't matter how expensive it is. It's not going to sell. But think about this for a minute. If you do market it correctly, if you do tell them why it's the solution to their problems, let's just do the math for a minute. A \$39 information product, anybody can afford that, right? If you sell 500 of them, that's \$19500, y'all.

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So a lot priced information product can make a huge difference in your business but only if it makes a difference in the consumer's life.

So if you get this concept about problems over features, if you can see how the main focus for your company and for your marketing should be what is the problem that we solve for our clients and how do we tell them about it, our main message is telling them through our digital marketing strategy that we were just talking about in previous steps that you need to have in place, right? If our main message from all of that stuff, the webinars and the content creation that we're doing is how to fix their problem, then the benefits and the features are only relevant after the buy is interested or even after they've purchased. They're like, yeah I want it, I've bought in, I get it, you're my solution, now tell me how it works.

So we've got this backwards. Stop telling the features. And I can't tell you how many designers and creatives I talk to every single month who want my help with their script or their stump speech or how to better sell themselves to contractors or architects or high-end clients or celebrity clients so they can stand out from their competition and actually get the jobs they're going out for consistently, they want me to figure that out for them or help them and here's the first thing that I do: the first question I ask them is why should the client pick you over the other designer? What problem do you solve for them? And you know what? They don't even know.

The designers usually say - and they start basically kind of telling me their features. I'm detail oriented, I infuse their personality into the design, I use original artwork, I'm great with color or fabrics or architectural detailing or some other designer-y thing, and they continue to give me this whole list that could literally be said about every single other designer in the world because just the fact that you're a designer really is an assumption that you can do all of that stuff or at least most of it, right? And yes, most people have different strengths than others, but the point is you can't make yourself stand out with telling those features.

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The paint and the flooring and the countertops and the floor plans, those are all features. But what is the problem that you solve for them? And more often than not, the people I'm working with just don't know. So friend, if you're in business in 2018 and beyond, the rules have completely changed. Just providing a service isn't enough if you want to make six figures, and especially if you want to make seven or eight.

Just providing a service is sort of like having a high school education instead of having a Master's degree. It's not enough anymore. It's time to up your game. There is no time to waste. And yeah, it's going to be hard and scary but the rewards personally and financially are so worth it.

Now, if you need help understanding this idea and you want to know more how we help people, just reach out to us at [info@tobifairley.com](mailto:info@tobifairley.com) because I know this is hard and it's what I think about all the time, the future of business. My top strength in Strengths Finders, you know that test? Are activator, which means taking action, achiever, which achieving, of course, maximizer, which is making the most out of something like your business or my business, and my fourth one is futuristic, which is this stuff right here, the skill I'm using today with you. Seeing the big picture and the future potential of a situation. And then my other one, my top five other strength is significance, which means I want to make a real significant difference, and that's why I'm here to help you and to help me.

So shoot us an email if you want to know more of how I do that but if you don't, just keep following me because just like I'm teaching you here, I will continue to give you free content just like on this podcast. I will continue to give free webinars so you can learn stuff from me whether you ever become my customer or not. Because that is the way of the future of our business.

So thanks everybody for hanging with me. I know sometimes it's tough to go deep in a topic like this, like business. Whether it's mindset work like we did a couple of weeks ago, super deep, or business today. It can be scary but it is life changing. This deep dive into business today is so full of opportunity for you and we are the designers and the creatives, us, here on

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*The Design You Podcast* that are the exact people who need to go out and take advantage of these opportunities for our future and for our business.

So I'll see you next week when we dive into our feelings. I promise it won't be this deep. I'll give you a break. But it's still going to be transformative because they always are and I bet a whole bunch of scary feelings came up today when you were listening to this podcast episode. So next week I'll tell you how to manage them and get you over the hump and the fear of moving into a business and a life that you truly love. So I'll see you then, friends. Bye-bye.

Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of *The Design You Podcast*. And if you'd like even more support for designing a business and a life that you love, then check out my exclusive monthly coaching program Design You at [tobifairley.com](http://tobifairley.com).