If you've ever felt like your business looks. It's way more put together on the outside than it is on the inside. Then you're in good company because I think a lot of creatives feel this way. They feel that their businesses are a little bit of a hot mess on the backend when it comes to the organization and the systems.

And I know even this week I had one of my coaching clients tell me that although they had been a photographer and in business for many, many years. They still describe their business as messy and slapped together. So if until recently you have identified as somebody who is like, yep, it feels a little chaotic.

I could definitely use some more organization than this is going to be a great episode for you here today, because you absolutely can run a creative business. In a way that is organized and smooth. And in today's episode, I'm going to give you five tips for getting and staying organized and in doing so become more profitable, because I do think that there is a direct correlation between your level of organization in the systems in your business and.

And your level of profitability. The sponsor of today's episode is Riverside FM. Riverside allows you to record studio quality audio and video either by yourself or with remote guests. It's what I've used to record all of my guest episodes here on the show from the very beginning, and there are so many.

So many reasons why I personally chose Riverside to create my podcast, but let me just share a few. The first one is the audio quality and ease of use. I can just send a link to my guests and they can join me in the studio. I love that Riverside allows me to chat with my guests live. From anywhere in the world.

Even when our internet connection is a little iffy, it records everything locally to the computer, so we don't miss a beat, no more glitchy interviews, which I love another great feature is the video editor and they have an AI powered clip creation tool for quick creation of. Social media size clips. So this is making it so much easier for me to create those vertical clips that I need for social media.

And it helps me to pick the best moments from the show. Click on the link in the description and head over to Riverside to start for free and be sure to use the code joy for 15 percent off. You're listening to called to both the podcast for ambitious women chasing both business dreams and little ones.

I'm your host, joy. Michelle. I'm a wedding photographer turned business coach and founder of photo boss. I have helped thousands of photographers and creatives grow their businesses here on the show. I teach about topics like

visibility, marketing, mindset, productivity, and going after your dream life. So if you're a photographer or an entrepreneur, there is something here for you.

This is not another business and marketing podcast telling you to do more. Take But rather how you can build your business and your income in less time and with greater ease, join me here each week for bite sized and actionable episodes that will encourage you on your call to both journey.

Okay. So there are five general pillars that I want to break down for you here today. And each one kind of has some stuff underneath. So it's probably more than five tips. It's more like five sections. But I'm going to try to get through it quickly because I do want this to be actionable. I still want this to be bite sized and something that you could like take notes.

You can either listen to this or take notes and actually start implementing as you go. And I'm guessing you have some of these things, which is the cool part about listening to podcasts is like, sometimes you're like, yes, okay, I have those things. And then you may get to a section where you realize, oh my gosh.

Okay, this is it. This is the part where I'm missing this piece of organization or I've over complicated it in this way Whatever it may be. So let's dive into the first point. And the first point is to systematize your creative process. So as creatives, I think that we can sometimes think that we can't systematize our process, that it needs our hand in every part of it.

And I definitely fell prey to that in the first few years, feeling like every part of this business needed me to touch it. Like every, Photo needed to be edited by me and every email needed to be handwritten in a brand new way. Like that kind of thing. So I think one way to go about this and make sure that you're checking off all these boxes is to implement a CRM.

So client relationship management system. When a client reaches out. Have a system in place to have a streamlined response process and follow ups. Not only is this going to keep you organized, but it's also going to save you time, which we all want to do that, right? Like how do we work less and still have a beautiful and effective client experience for our clients?

I use and love HoneyBook in my business as my CRM. So this is an all in one business management. platform that is hand tailored for a creative business. So this helps me with my invoicing, my questionnaires. Um, I handle all of my like onboarding for my clients, communication, that kind of thing. So everything

that comes through my business as far as an inquiry is going to come into HoneyBook.

And that way I know that nothing's going to slip through the cracks. So when I used to have everything just come into my Gmail account, there was It was more confusing because there's a lot of other emails mixed in, but there's also a chance that it could fall through the cracks and something could happen and I could miss it.

So I really liked the way that HoneyBook is set up. I've been a client of theirs for like seven years and they're just constantly adding new things and some of their new features are like, just making it even better. Like there's text reminders for clients for their meetings. So if somebody books a session with you or a meeting with you, they're going to not only get an email reminder, but a text reminder.

So like, there's just so many cool things that they're adding and it's just making my life easier when it comes to the process of working with me. So in addition to that, I also would encourage you to have some email templates, even if it's just like in your Gmail account. So creating and using some email templates for like common responses that you will have in your business is going to help you to maintain that consistency and just lead to greater organization and saving time.

This can also be applied to your editing. So if you're a photographer and you're processing through hundreds or thousands of images, developing the templates for Exactly how you go through and go about your editing. Like presets are a great way to do this, but you can also have templates of how you're importing images into Lightroom and exporting images out of Lightroom.

So all those settings can be templatized and saved so that you're really saving yourself a lot of time on all the things that you're doing. Um, over and over and over again. The other area of this in your creative process is your workflows. So establishing a workflow so that you're not reinventing anything and you can just follow those set guide, like step one, step two, step three is going to be so helpful, especially for those times where, you know, life happens, vacations are happening.

Your kids are sick. Like what? When life really starts happening, those workflows are going to start doing the heavy lifting for you. And this is something that I've talked about a lot. I've, I have my personal workflows in

hobby to pro toolkit. So my onboarding workflow is in there. My album design workflow is in there.

Like what are the steps that I take to proof an album with a client, things like that, that's all included in hobby to pro toolkit. So sitting down and really thinking like, have I thought through all these different processes in my business in a way that like, I've created a template for it and a checklist.

And I know where I am with each client. That's what I'm talking about here. And for me personally, like this sounds like not a fun time. Okay. So I have to like, Make it fun by rewarding myself with something on the other side Like I have to gamify things in my business for the things that I don't want to do so if you're Wondering like okay How do other people have the discipline to work on things in their business that they don't want to work on?

Like we don't we literally don't we just make it a game or we? Pay someone to do it or we get a coach and we have that accountability and that money exchange happened and all of a sudden you're highly motivated to finish like You This is the stuff that I do to finish the things in my business that I don't want to finish.

Like, if I'm being honest, those are all things that I have done to kind of like kick it into gear and finish the things like workflows and presets and templates and email stuff and getting honey book fully set up. Not fun. Right. In my opinion, not a good time, but I'm so deeply thankful that I have those things set up.

So, so grateful when I look at my phone. And I can see this inquiry just came in, this person just got a brochure, this person just made a selection from the brochure. And like I didn't touch anything, right? Like it's all happening with, on automation and they're getting the things that they need. They're getting on a call, they're booking things onto my schedule, they're making their payments.

That is what you're working towards and that feels so good when you get that set up. And you can set things up with as much or as little automations without you as possible, but you don't want to avoid the templates and all of these workflows thinking, okay, I want to make sure that like, I'm approving every single thing, so I'm not going to go ahead and build the template either way.

Even if you want to approve and look at and tweak and customize every single email that goes out to a client, I still recommend that you work from a template because you're still going to take so much off of your plate by just having like

your frequently asked questions or your policies all inside of a template somewhere that you can, you can draw from.

Because trust me, when you're tired and life is happening and you just want to get back to that client, It will actually help you to at least have a starting point for those emails. Okay, so the second thing to do for staying organized in your business is to manage your finances effectively. Okay, this is a good one.

I have three sub points for this one. I'm laughing because I know that for so many of you, this is like, this is not a fun topic, but we're going to make it fun. We're going to make it easy. We're going to make it fun. First step, separate out your business and your personal finances. If you've already done this, awesome.

Pat yourself on the back. You want to keep that stuff distinct. You want to keep it separate. It makes it easier when you're filing taxes and it's also legally messy if you don't have it separate, especially if you have an LLC because There's, there's stuff happening there that shouldn't be happening. So separate out those business and the personal finances.

The next thing that you're going to do is track your income and your expenses regularly. So monitoring that income stream and your expenses will help you to stay in attuned to what's happening in your business, but you will be much more likely to be making good financially healthy decisions. When you're just aware of what's happening, the cash flow, like the money in the money out, like you're going to be a cash flow queen at this point.

Now, if you don't want to do this in your business, I do recommend that you get a bookkeeper because someone else can do this for you. And then they can just send you a monthly report and tell you like, Hey, you made 10, 000 and you spent 4, 000. Yay. Here's your profit. And that's going to be really, really helpful.

The third part of this is review the numbers frequently. So schedule those, those check ins with your, like on, to look at all that financial data and to really sit down and look at like, okay, I'm paying. This many hundreds of dollars for this software. Are you still using it? You know, like sometimes we get these softwares and they are really really helpful just for a season in our businesses Like I know I had like a posing software on my phone and then eventually I just stopped using it and like I don't need To be paying for that anymore um, you know, you might have a subscription that's coming up for a renewal and If you're sitting down and you're having those regular check ins You know You will catch them before it bills you and just save yourself from being like, Oh crap, I didn't want to renew that.

I don't, I don't actually need it anymore. Whatever it may be, or realizing that you have some redundancies. Like I have, I've done some things where I'm like, Oh, I have this plugin for my website and I have this plugin and they do the exact same thing. Why am I paying for both of them? Things like that. So that's the second thing.

The third thing is I want you to embrace the rule of thumb. One. And this is going to like simplify everything and organize your life. One calendar, one digital calendar system, one project management tool, one social media scheduling tool, one printing lab, simplify your tools. Sometimes disorganization stems from.

Not us not having these things that are availability, but the fact that we're using too many tools. So by committing to one app or tool in each given area. You will greatly reduce the complexity of your business and increase your efficiency. So like I said, one calendar, so one calendar to manage all of your appointments.

Don't, don't have all this like crossover confusion. One project management tool for me, I use and love Notion, but this could be anything. This could be Trello. This could be Asana. All of your project Management needs go into that tool. And then you have like one social media scheduler. So if you're using like Metro cool or buffer or, um, later one of those, like have one tool.

And like I said, one printing lab. So if you do printing for albums, client work, um, canvases, anything like that in your business, streamline that process. Even if you use more than one lab, like I know some people will have one for prints and one for albums, whatever it is. Reduce it if it's possible, reduce it down, get loyal to one lab, find one that you can get behind that has the quality that you're looking for, the price points that you're looking for and stick with it.

It will simplify everything. Okay. Number four schedule, regular cleanups, just like with your house and your household chores, your business is going to need that like regular maintenance. So schedule some time for tidying up. the business. And for me, like, this looks like regular maintenance type stuff.

Like, there's regular things that need to be done. And then there's also a deep clean side of things. So your business is going to need both of those things. The occasional deep clean is going to be necessary to keep everything running smoothly. But I do love a 20 minute quick clean. And so this is what this looks like for me.

So you know that quick clean before guests come over to your house and you know people are coming over or someone's swinging by and you pick up the clutter, you stuff some stuff in a closet, you wipe down some counters, you put out a nice new candle, you like fluff the pillows, you do the stuff, like it looks nicer.

That's what you want to do. but for your business. And what I do in this 20 minutes is going to be, you have five minute dedications to each of these categories. So five minutes dedicated to organizing computer files. That could be my trash can, my desktop things. I am a desktop girly. Like my desktop goes to disarray.

It just slowly does. And every so often about once a week, I've got to go in and make some decisions. Like some stuff needs to get backed up. Some stuff needs to go to Google drive or be pulled into Notion or sent to someone and then I can get rid of it. So five minutes to organizing all the different files in your computer, not just your desktop.

But for me, the desktop is a doozy five minutes to clearing out your inbox. Now you might be like five minutes is not going to do anything. Like my inbox is a disaster. But five minutes is going to help you greatly, especially if you actually set a timer, the way that you're start thinking when you're looking at all these emails, you're going to think like delete quick responses, file it away, delete quick responses.

Okay. What can I put? I'm going to put this to, to the side, save it, put it on my to do list. If it's something that requires more of a response, just five minutes in your inbox. I'm going to do this a little more often than once a week, but if I'm doing a quick sweep, quick 20 minute cleanup, it's definitely going to get included.

Five minutes to updating your CRM. Now, what I mean by this is I go into HoneyBook and I look at everything that's been happening, like who needs to get a follow up, who has already paid and booked and I need to move them somewhere else in my pipeline. Maybe there's a project that We're done. Like I should just archive it.

I don't need to be looking at it. I'm just saying to take some time and clean that up a little bit. Maybe ask for a review from someone like that kind of thing. So get in there, clean up, see what I can get rid of. If somebody is late on a payment, send that payment reminder, things like that, where it's like, we're getting in there and we're just doing some quick cleanup.

And then the last thing is five minutes inside of a project management tool. Now, HoneyBook is my client management tool and then Notion is my project management tool. So I'm going to go into Notion with the sole intention of like, what can I clean? What can I get rid of? What can I delete? What can I move?

What can I get out of the way so that I'm not seeing it? So I don't go in, in this mind space of like, Let me actually do the things on my project list, but this is more so like what project has needs to be moved along. Um, and if you have like Trello, there's a little card, so you could slide your card to the next stage, right?

You could notify a team member. You could say, Oh, I, I delivered those photos. Let's, let's move that to the finished category. So these are the types of regular check ins that do need to happen for you to move things along in all of the different systems that you're building. So your project management, your inbox, your client management, and even your computer itself is going to need some, some help.

It's going to need some pushing along. And that has helped me, like just that mental shift of thinking, like, the only way for this to stay organized is the same way that my laundry gets done. Reluctantly, if I'm being honest, reluctantly, but consistently. The only way for me to get laundry done for my family is if I'm, you know, Pretty much constantly running it and I'm constantly transferring it.

And then I'm moving it into baskets. And then eventually I, it gets high enough where I'm like, all right, I got to sit down and listen to some podcasts, fold it, put it away, and it all starts over again. But the same is also kind of true for our organization. there's gonna, there's going to be required maintenance.

Okay, last but not least, prioritize creative time. Fueling your own creativity is so important and it, I think this is such a relevant part of the whole equation of our business for, for us as the creative, but also for staying organized, because when you are in your own creativity, like you're, you're leaving time for creative pursuits to stay inspired and to stay passionate about your work, you will find more clarity and you'll have more ideas and more focus.

And then when you have those things, it is much, much easier to keep the ship moving, to keep the projects moving, to keep all of the stuff that we just talked about, like all the things that you've set up, to stay excited about it. And I think this is like, this is, could be its own thing, like protecting your creativity.

Building, you know, ways in your life, like building that time for yourself so that you have, you're refueling yourself as a creative. It is so important. And what we're talking about here, I think, especially when it comes to being a creative Professional creative is like we're balancing our work and our creativity.

So I really want you to be thinking about ways to ensure that the business side of things don't completely overshadow your creativity and your creative activities in your business. So whether it's business related or not, we know when like things are creatively fueling us and we're recharging as a creative.

And I just think that having those. Sessions or times or blocks that are protected for you to prioritize. Being a creative and being an artist, those are going to help to keep the vision alive and keep your enthusiasm high as the creative business owner. So set aside some time, just the same way that we talked about for that 20 minute cleanup, to work Have like even like explore experiment enjoy the craft of what you do as a creative I think this is going to keep your business more vibrant and forward thinking And I started doing this as a result of reading the book the artist's way A few years ago.

I want to say this was like three Maybe three or four years ago, I read the artist's way for the first time. I have since reread this book two or three more times. It is such a good book. If you haven't read the artist's way, I do really highly recommend it. Um, the first couple of chapters are a little odd.

Like there are, there are a little woo, they're a little out there. And I've even had people DM me and be like. Is this the book you recommended? Like, I'm a little confused. I, I want you to push past that, like push past the woo and, and hear the meaning behind some of this stuff because it, it really helped me.

So there's a challenge in this book that's called the weekly artist date, where you take yourself and your inner artist on a weekly date to nurture this part of yourself. And it is really fun. It like this practice actually reminded me. Of how I haven't, I hadn't at the time, been doing a lot of the things that I used to love, like watercolor painting, film photography, uh, exploring small bookshops, spending time outside, um, just to walk and think and pray.

And like planting flowers and listening to like music from from old movies that I loved things like that. Like it's funny how it drew out this practice of the artist's date. It drew out parts of my creativity that I hadn't visited in so long that just almost like revived my soul. So anyway, whether you read the artist's way

or not, I would really recommend that you set a date or a little time, like even an hour on your calendar right now, where.

As you have lunch even like take a break from editing take a break from consultations take a break from what you're doing in your business to build passive revenue, whatever it is and Get out some watercolor paints or some calligraphy pens or whatever it may be And just revisit that creative side of you that's not linked to making money.

That's not linked to a project or a deadline Something happens when you nurture that part of yourself. And I think it's extremely, extremely rewarding for a complete list of everything that I broke down in today's episode, including a discount for HoneyBook and some other project management links and tools and resources.

Head to the show notes for today's episode. You can go to my blog at joymichelle. co forward slash blog and see the show notes for any of these episodes. But this one is particularly note heavy. So if you're looking for more resources or you want to dive a little bit deeper into a CRM or a project management tool, things like that, I have a lot more links in the In the show notes for this episode, thank you so much for listening to the show.

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