

Episode 15 With Amy A Pearl

Wambui: Hi there, Amy. It's so nice to have you on my show. Thanks for being here.

Amy: Oh, I'm so happy to be here. I'm happy to help in any way I can.

Wambui: Thank you, Amy. You're always very helpful. So for those of my listeners who don't know you, please tell them who you are.

Amy: Yeah, I'd be happy to. My name is Amy Pearl, and I own a company called Work Ignited. For the last 25 years, I've specialized in offering leadership assessment and development programs to corporations, not-for-profits, and other organizations. So my clients span from large global companies right down to tiny little not-for-profits or small businesses, even here in my backyard in Buffalo, New York. Last year I also launched a little, I call it a side job helping coaches and course creators who want to get into the B2B space figure out, like, how do they get their foot in the door? And how do they deliver in that environment? Most, I guess, experts out there who teach people how to sell their courses and coaching programs tend to focus on a B-to-C business-to-consumer sort of approach. And I've never done that. My approach has always been to sell to businesses. So if I can share some of that wisdom with your audience and other people, I'm happy to do that.

Wambui: Yes. And I'm one of those coaches in your course. So much. And I've gained a lot of insight. There is so much value in your course. So please tell my listeners about the B2B model, because I love that model.

Amy: Yes. Well, if you are frustrated by social media, posting, and dancing on TikTok, if you are launching and not getting a lot of people to register for your course. If you're just frustrated with the whole kind of sales process, B2B is a great way to go. So forever I've been in this B2B space, and almost all of the work that I did before the pandemic was in person. I would either go to companies to deliver training, or we'd be in a hotel someplace, or my coaching clients would come to my office. Like, everything would be in person then when COVID hit and everybody had to go home. My business went from like a gazillion dollars a month to nothing every night, like every other business on the planet. I like sitting around for a few weeks making chocolate chip cookies and doing jigsaw puzzles like everyone else. But then I said, I need to get serious. And my kids are Gen Z, you know, and they're like, mom, get with the times, buy yourself a camera, subscribe to Zoom, and get back to work because you can do everything you did in person online. And that was a totally foreign world to me. I started taking courses in, you know, how do you build digital courses? How do you sell on social media? And it all seemed okay, except it was all positioned around. How do you sell to the actual participants in your program? I'm not too smart. It took me months. To sort of figure it out, I don't know how to do this. I have never sold to my participants. I don't; although I try to do a great job for them and I want them to be happy, they're not clients. Then one day it sort of hit me that if you're in the B2B space, you have two customers, you have participants that you need to serve, and you need to make sure that they learn, they grow, and they accomplish what they're supposed to accomplish. But you have your purchaser, the person within the business, the executive. Or, in my case, it's a

human resources professional that is your client. Once you kind of create that separation in your mind that your participants and your purchasers are probably two different people, everything becomes much clearer because then you just focus on how to find more of those purchasers. How do I connect with them? And get a whole bunch of them in my database, so to speak. And then, how do I take that to another level of engagement? Because, you know, businesses aren't impulse purchasers; they like to do their research; they want to make sure that you're the expert; they want to see, like, what kind of stuff do you do? So how do you engage with them at a deeper level to show them that you know what you're doing? If you've helped other people, you can help too, and then the delivery process is a little different. Because, you know, if you're selling to consumers, you want them to get the most out of the course, and you want them to finish it and all those kinds of things. But if they don't finish your course, it's kind of their problem, not yours, but in the B2B space, you have to be accountable. And build accountability with your participants to achieve the goals that the business wants.

Wambui: Right. And you also want to be invited back.

Amy: You want to be invited back, right? Because if you can drive that change, you become like a trusted advisor to them. Then they just rely on you for everything. And whether it's, you know, they're going to use your course with different cohorts within their organization or they want you to deliver additional courses, Or you've coached one person and had great results. Now you're going to get called back to coach and coach again. That is where the key difference comes in. That's why you don't have to post on social media every day. That's why you don't have to be doing exhausting launches because once you have a bank of customers that hire you over and over again, your business can grow from there. Not that you're not always marketing or thinking about finding new clients, but it just becomes that pressure. You know, sell a bunch of stuff this month. And the next month I had nothing—a bunch of stuff—and nothing. You know, when you're in the B2B space and you get them using your products or your services on a regular basis, it creates that steady revenue stream for you.

Wambui: Steady revenue stream. And you're selling from one to many.

Amy: Yes.

Wambui: That's a very good model. I adapted it because, again, once I took your course, I was like, ah, I think this is a very good model too, especially for me, who has nine to five and can only have so much time to

Amy: Yeah.

Wambui: One-on-ones to my calendar. So on my day off, I'm able to just reach out to, a business, and if I can just sell to maybe about 20 people, that's good. That's a good way of maximizing my time.

Amy: Absolutely. And I know it's probably tricky because I think a lot of your audience is working nine to five. Eight to six, or who knows, right? But that does make it hard because if you're selling to a business, they don't want to do training on a Saturday afternoon when you

have time; they want to do it on a Tuesday morning. So you got to kind of work that. Who knows? Maybe you're trying to break into the coaching business. If you live on the West Coast, maybe you target people on the East Coast, or if you're on the East Coast, maybe you target people on the West Coast. Then you can work. In your off hours, you are, you are building your own client base and your own contacts, just working the time zones a little bit. Or maybe, you can have some flexibility in what you do now, or maybe you can go part-time as you start to build your own business, where you might be working someplace part-time and then building your own business part-time as well, just a little tricky. You gotta. Be a master scheduler.

Wambui: You're going to be a master scheduler. And that's where we come to productivity because you're a master of productivity.

Amy: Yeah.

Wambui: So tell us, how does one avoid burnout? How do you become productive, especially again, when you have a nine to five and you only have one? But in a number of hours in the day, tell my listeners how you become productive. How do they manage their time? Cause that's a big challenge. I find.

Amy: Yes, I know. I think sometimes it's a challenge we put on ourselves, it's because you're a perfectionist. You're a very responsible person. You're responsible at work. You're responsible at home. You know, you can't say no, all these kinds of things. I am telling you that because I've done all those things, you know, for years and years and years. But I think there are maybe three or four things that can help you to really stay on track in terms of productivity. One, as you said, I'm a huge planner. I was just always a planner my whole life. I worked for a bank where you had to live and die by a plan. I'm just like a super planner. That's not always helpful because sometimes I think you're a little too rigid once you have that plan like you don't want to deviate from it.

Wambui: I think it's very helpful because especially in your course, you could tell this course was well-planned

Amy: I know. Well, I created, my course is like, you know, every single day you do something right. But, as I've gotten older, I guess I've gotten away from planning around specific goals, and that might be counterintuitive with the whole planning thing. But, I sat back and I said, like, first of all, I just want to have a clear picture of what I want my life to be like.

Wambui: Okay.

Amy: Not what I want to achieve. Just what do I want my life to be like, what do I want to have in my life? What do I want to enjoy in my life? How do I want to be spending my time? What do I want to be feeling? I kind of drew a picture. I wish I was away. I would like to turn my screen. Cause I have a picture posted right on my wall, right? I have this picture, like a drawing and then I thought about, okay, like, where am I today? And what do I need to do to get from where I am today to where this picture that I have that I've drawn? Then the second thing I thought about was why is that important to me. So what kind of life do I want to have? And why is that really important to me? And I have this little statement that I like written out.

Like a year and a half ago, and it's taped right in my closet. So like every morning I look at that, like, this is my purpose. This is what I'm, why I'm doing what I'm doing. And I've found that, yes, I still set goals for my business and, you know, I have a shopping list for the holidays and that kind of thing. But like, you can really lose sight of what your real priorities are and your focus if you don't have some of those guiding things. Of course, you can set some goals for yourself. I mean, it might be a certain number of clients you want to target or a certain number of pounds you want to lose or whatever it might be. I tend to now think about those things as areas of focus. Like I just want to focus on three things right now. I want to focus on growing my assessment business. I want to focus on launching a course and I want to focus on getting my marketing strategies together, whatever it might be, but just what are the key areas of focus that I know are going to take me toward that life that I really want. I think again, maybe it's an effect of COVID. I don't really set 12-month goals anymore because I mean, heck, if somebody at the end of 2019 said, where do you think you're going to be a year from now? Like that was all vaporized overnight. Right? So now I just tend to tackle things in what I call a 12-week sprint, just a sprint. It's like a dash. You can do anything in 12 weeks. I can stay focused on anything for 12 weeks. It's three months, right? What do I want to get done in the next three months? And that way I feel like more of an immediate sense of accomplishment. Like it's not this big thing that I'm trying to get to and it keeps getting pushed off. I think that's the thing if you start with a clear picture of what you want your life to be like and why you want it to be like that. And what are those key areas of focus? What do you want to accomplish in the next, maybe for you, it's six weeks or 12 weeks, whatever the right number is. And then you approach it. Like it's just this little sprint and then I make it really visual. It's hanging right on my wall. So like, I look at it all the time or hanging in my closet. I see it every morning and that way it keeps centering you back to what you're focusing on. When it gets then to now, all right, so how does that help you to avoid burnout? Well, if you know, whatever's happening in my life, if I just keep coming back to some of these guiding principles, like I cannot get flustered by these things. So, I see people who. They feel like they're behind, like I'm behind, well, you might be behind. If you're not trying to chase a number, you're not trying to chase, but if you're just trying to chase a purpose, like, did I spend my day today the way I want to spend it? Yes, I did. And if I didn't, well, I just don't want to have two bad days in a row. So tomorrow I'm going to spend it better. Or if I want to eat healthier, well, maybe I ate pizza today. Well, I'm not going to eat pizza two days in a row. Tomorrow I'm going to spend the day the way I want to spend it. So again, you can have this sort of immediate sense of accomplishment, these little wins that you're making. And then you don't feel like you're behind or, you know, trailing on something. I think another thing to that. To help you not feel burned out is like, don't compare yourself to other people. As soon as you start comparing yourself to other people, you are definitely going to feel like you're not keeping up because for sure, no matter where you are, there are people ahead of you for, for sure, it's just life. You can really let that mess with your head. And then you just feel like, I just can't do this. I can't keep up. And now I'm burned out. Cause I don't feel like I'm moving as fast as other people are moving. Who cares? So what? Right. I mean, if you're a coach, there are good jillions of people out there that. That needs coaches. So some other coach found somebody, you could go find somebody else to coach. I mean, it's sort of like, stop comparing yourself to other people. And then that will really help you, I think, to avoid feeling overwhelmed, avoid feeling behind, avoid feeling like you're not good enough. Like just knowing what your purpose is and how you want to spend your days. And what are the key things that you're focused on just stay focused on them.

Wambui: This is so helpful. I like the productivity part where I get clear the clarity piece, then the why, and then the focus. And then the no comparison, it's like, just use, let that person inspire you, don't compare yourself. I love that. I'm going to watch this podcast over and over and take notes.

Amy: Well, I just see so many people, again, that it's that comparison thing I really think is the worst because you're constantly comparing yourself to what somebody else has or what is somebody else doing or what are they achieving. And like, you never. You honestly never know. I've worked my whole life. I've got my kids, I worked all the time they were growing up and the woman across the street from me stayed home, but she has six kids. I only have two. She has six. So I get, she stays home and, every morning in the summer, she would be sitting on her front porch.

Wambui: Okay.

Amy: And so I would back out of my driveway going to work and I could see her in my rearview mirror having her cup of coffee. I would back out all the time thinking, Oh my gosh, I wish I could just stay home with my kids. You know, I wish I could be home with my kids and then I'd get to work and I'd be loving and I'm like, Oh my gosh, I'm so glad I'm not with my kids. They can do whatever. But then I was talking to her one day and she said, you know, I watch you go to work every day. And some days I just think I wish I could go to work like Amy does. So I think we always just won't like what the person on the other side of the street has.

Wambui: Yes.

Amy: Just stop like, love what you have love where you're heading, and love yourself. You won't feel that overwhelmed feeling behind feeling, If I hear one more person say they are suffering from imposter syndrome, I'm like, who invented that word? Like, it's a terrible word. We should never use it. Edit that out of this podcast.

Wambui: Yes, I know. I did that out because I know with the, and now that's clear because again, you're saying don't compare yourself. Just right. Love where you are. Love yourself and focus on your purpose. And then you want this imposter syndrome thing going on, but that's, that's huge. Now then that's one of the things that I actually have been talking about in this podcast, because a lot of people, again, don't feel good about themselves. And now we have you telling us not to compare ourselves, to be okay with where we are.

Amy: Yes, for sure. Right. I mean. You have so many talents and so many unique gifts that you bring to the table. Sometimes people don't know what those are. So when I'm working with the leaders that I coach, that's where I start. Let's inventory your talents, your traits, your values, and your beliefs. Like, let's understand. What is important to you and special? Then figure out how you use those to lead to your best ability and recognize that you aren't going to have some of the ingredients that other people bring to the table that don't make you a terrible leader. It just makes you a different kind of leader and you have to be smart enough to figure out how to close those gaps and a good leader surrounds themselves with people who can. Support them and help them to kind of round themselves out. So maybe you're not the biggest picture thinker on the planet. Well, you better hire somebody who can come up

with new ideas and creative ideas and work together with them. And I think if you're in an entrepreneurial role I think entrepreneurs often feel like they've got to wear all the hats and then that's just, you're headed. Really to disaster and again, burnout because nobody can be good at everything, and smart business owners hire people who are smarter than them to teach them how to do the stuff and to do the stuff for them that they don't enjoy doing all the time.

Wambui: The delegate. For those who can't afford to hire many people or a big team, what would you recommend? Should they start maybe with a virtual assistant?

Amy: Oh my gosh. Yes. Now I can tell you, I have had I've never had a huge team. I mean, since I used to work in corporate America where I had, you know, big teams, but in my business, the most people I ever had working with me was seven people.

Wambui: Okay.

Amy: And they were all, but we did a lot of things. That's another recipe for burnout. If you're thinking of going into business, you're very tempted when you're just starting out to try to be everything because you're trying to make money. So I'm going to do this one day, and I'm going to do this another day, and I'm going to do this another day, and I'm going to do this another day. And all of a sudden, it's really hard to even describe what your business does and what you do, because you do so many different things. You don't gain economies of scale and efficiencies in your business because you're all over the place. And you don't get a reputation for things my reputation in my market with my clients. People know me as the person who does assessments. You know, I do disc, I do 360-degree feedback, all that kind of stuff. And people know that if they're going to hire me for something, it's probably going to have an assessment component to it. But it took me a long time to figure out like, what do I really love to do? So at one point, I had a lot of people because we were doing so many different things and that cost a lot of money. And then over the years, I've figured out like, how do you specialize and how do you stay focused? And, then all of a sudden you really grow in that area and your business becomes bigger. But if you use technology and you tap into it, you don't have to hire. Employees you can use, whether it's other consultants or like you said, virtual assistants. So right now I have one person that works for me. And then I have a company that I hired to help me with my tech. Cause I'm like tech is not my love language. I have like no idea what I'm doing, right? I can barely, mute myself on this microphone all the time. And then I have another person that just helps me a little bit on the marketing side. But what we were able to do was build Quick systems. I don't need to use them a lot. They just helped me to build templates and frameworks and those kinds of things. I can just call them when I need them. I think the key to managing your expenses is to stay focused on what you do, really become known for something, build your processes to support that business, and then tap into people Maybe you don't hire an employee to start with, use a virtual assistant and actually, you can work with some people from other countries, and it's very inexpensive, and they deliver very high-quality things, and then find the right results. Then find the right tech people. I would say marketing people and how to do that; get involved in different groups and see who other people are using people that you respect and people that you trust. And they're like, okay, she's working with that company. I'm going to work with that company, or he's working with that programmer. I'm going to work on that program and that kind of thing. As your business grows, you might hire a lot of people, or you might not. You may not.

Wambui: The key thing here is to, specialize in what you're good at and delegate to others the things that they're good at.

Amy: Or just don't do it.

Wambui: Oh, just don't do it.

Amy: Just don't do it. Right, it's also not just what you're good at; it's what you like to do because, when you're in business, you're going to talk about this stuff. All the time and for a very long time. So if it isn't a topic that you love, that you're passionate about, and that you can do, you know, it's, it's really if you go down a path that you don't love, it's work.

Wambui: Yeah.

Amy: Like I'm going to work. And so when the pandemic first started, again, my clients are, there are a lot of them are human resources people. So I was like staying in touch with them with my new camera and my Zoom stuff. And I was hearing from all of them, really all of them that they were lonely sitting at home. They were frustrated that the only thing they were doing was helping people to figure out how to work from home. They weren't, you know, challenged mentally. They had missed the camaraderie of being in the office. And so it sounded to me like a membership program would be ideal. So I created this membership program for women leaders. It was women in leadership. I called it fabulous together. I'm all about the word fabulous. I use that in all my stuff. Fabulous together. We had two meetings a month. I had all these online modules. It was the slickest thing on the planet. The first year was fun. The second year, it started to feel like work.

Wambui: Okay.

Amy: I didn't like it. It wasn't what I loved to do. I realized I'm a course person. I like the beginning and the end. I'm not a membership person who has this never-ending commitment to people that I'm going to do stuff for them every month. It just became like work. So I made the decision; I'm going to wrap up the membership. We did it at the two-year mark. We had a big party. We had people; it was in person. People came in; it was a lot of fun. I would give them a little present and say, Thanks for the fun, but this is done. And people were super appreciative that we gave them that support during that time and got them through some difficult situations. I mean, I probably could have found somebody who wanted to take it over and grow it. Maybe I could have sold it. I don't know, but I think you just have to know that whatever you do, you're going to be doing it for a long time, and you're going to be doing it a lot. So make sure you enjoy it

Wambui: That's good. That is the fact that you need to love what you do, not just do something that, oh, you have to do it like you're talking about the membership. And I'm sure you did well at that. But then you were like, okay, this is not my thing.

Amy: It was beautiful. I still have it sitting there. It's all bundled up in the little, you know, Kajabi thing, whatever. It looks great. Someday, maybe I'll do something with it.

Wambui: That's good; this is so helpful. This is all very good information, Amy. Now I would love for you to tell my listeners, where can they find you?

Amy: My website is just amyapearl.com. So my middle initial is a; that's another thing. Get your website name, like right now, because somebody has it. Right. So, but mine, Amyapearl.com. And if you go to Amyapearl.com/Podlove, P O D L O V E. I've got some little goodies just for you. There are some quick video tips on things that you should include in either your course or your membership program. If you're selling B2B, what needs to be in there? And then you can also download my 10 ways to get your foot in the door. Because that is always everyone's number one question. How do I get my foot in the door? So I've put together my 10 favorite ways, and none of them have to do with social media, because when I started my business, social media didn't even exist. So you can, you know, build your business. Social media is great. Maybe you're a LinkedIn fan. You have a lot of connections. Go ahead, use it, go for it. But if you're like me, I don't have a following, I don't have any connections. Don't let that stop you. You can build your business in a more traditional way.

Wambui: That's awesome. I'll make sure that I link that in my show notes now, but you're on social media. I know you do post some on Monday, so what is your social media handle?

Amy: So on my social media, everything is like this; my Facebook is my full name, [Amy A Pearl](#). I should change that. But if you looked up [Amy Almeter Pearl](#), it would come up. And my Instagram is [Amyapearl](#). And I do. post for fun, you know, all the time. And I do; I post helpful hints. I also have a Facebook group that I just launched for both learning and development professionals and human resources professionals, as well as coaches and course creators. So like anybody who loves learning, that is just my business name [work ignited](#). People can join that group. And like I post there almost every day. So, my social media life is just for fun. I don't get tons of business that way, but I'll tell you another funny story. If you have time for a funny story,

Wambui: Oh, I do.

Amy: So. When I went from kind of in-person to online, everyone said, Oh, you gotta be on social media. You gotta be on Instagram, whatever. So I started my Instagram account, Amyapearl, and I started posting every day, and I posted on LinkedIn like I've had LinkedIn forever. I don't know how many years, but when I started posting every day, my phone wasn't ringing off the hook, but occasionally people would comment or like something, whatever.

Wambui: Yeah.

Amy: And after a year of posting every day, I think my Instagram followers were like 200, and I was like, you got to be kidding. Like, this is so much work to get 200 Instagram followers. I stopped. I'm like, forget it. I'm just going to post when I feel like it. Suppose I have something coming up. Do I have something to share? Well, so a couple of months went by, and I was in a craft store of all places in the wedding aisle because my son was getting married. We were having an engagement party. I was shopping for supplies.

Wambui: Okay.

Amy: Lol, and behold, down the aisle from me is the CEO of this huge health system where I live. His name is Mark, and I've done work for him over the years, and he's like down the aisle, and his daughter's getting married that weekend, and he went out to buy candles or something. We're standing in the aisle. So we're chatting. And the CEO of this health system says to me, I miss you. Your social media posts And I'm like, You were even looking at them? And he's like, yeah. I found them inspirational and informative. What that told me was that you have to have a presence, even if it's just to maintain that connection with your existing clients to stay in their minds, you know, so that they might not have a problem. They might not be buying anything from you on social media today, but when they have a need, they'll be like, Oh, Amy. I see her funny posts every Monday, or her crazy picture with her hair all over the place. She's hiking on a mountain, you know, so put yourself out there. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there. But don't feel like if you don't have a large social media following, all is lost because all it takes is one business for you to have, you know, 10 or a hundred people in your course, or to have, you know, three coaching engagements like lickety split.

Wambui: That's awesome. That's good. Yeah, it's good to stay on top of your mind. You never know who's watching. You don't know.

Amy: You never know. Right.

Wambui: Thank you so much. Amy. I could talk to you all day, asking questions. I always like engaging with you.

Amy: Oh, I love to talk to you too. You know, I'm always willing to help anyone. So you know, hop on social media with me or hop into my little pod, love a landing page, and grab some stuff. If I can be helpful to you, that's what I'm here for.

Wambui: Definitely. Please head on to Amy's site. You did give us a link. I'll put it in the show notes.

Amy: And yeah, it's Amyapearl.com/podlove to get the free stuff.

Wambui: Thanks, Amy. I appreciate you. And I appreciate your time.

Amy: Yeah.

Wambui: You're welcome.