



Episode 13:

Getting Your Priorities Straight

[A transcript of this episode.](#)

Welcome to the Professional Website Investors podcast. The show where we talk about what it takes to successfully buy, operate, scale, and sell a thriving eCommerce business. When it comes to doing business online, we believe that buying an existing website is far superior to building one from scratch. If you're a career professional who's looking to become an eCommerce store owner, listening to this show will give you the knowledge, tools, and community support you need to be successful.

I'm your host, Ryan Cowden. This week we're joined by Ian Bond from professionalwebsiteinvestors.com. In this episode of the Professional Website Investor podcast, Ian and I discuss how to set long-term and short-term goals to maximize your productivity. We all have goals in our lives. But some people are more intentional about setting and reflecting on them.

In our busy, fast-paced world, setting goals can be one way of prioritizing your tasks and staying productive. Long-term goals can provide constant reference points to keep you on track, while short-term goals can help you stay productive on a daily and weekly basis. There are a lot of things to consider when it comes to setting goals. We want to set long-term goals, but the world is changing quickly. On the other end of the spectrum, short-term goals can provide structure no matter where you choose to work and live.

In this episode, you'll hear a system for setting long-term goals. Ian recommends thinking in terms of 90-day blocks of time, setting goals for that timeframe, and emphasizing how you can control your calendar. Next, we'll

look at some short-term goals designed to maximize your productivity. We'll discuss some strategies and some apps you can use to measure your time usage, and the time spent by the virtual workers you choose to hire. Then, we'll discuss how you can prioritize these goals.

Urgent and important goals must come first. But Ian also recommends spending some time every day focusing on a new skill that you like to learn. After that, we'll cover some systems for revisiting and reflecting on the goals you set. Ian recommends having someone else to do this process with. That could be your spouse, someone in your community, or a coach that you've hired. Finally, we'll talk about the role that fear and risk play in goal setting, and the importance of challenging yourself and taking risks no matter what stage of life you're in.

If you're looking to maximize your productivity, and set lasting goals to keep you on track, then this episode is one you won't want to miss. There's a lot of actionable advice in this episode. Grab something to write with because you are going to want to take notes. As always, I'll be back on the other side to wrap up any loose ends. Without any further adieu, here's my conversation with Ian Bond.

RYAN: All right, Ian. Welcome back to the show. It's good to see you again. How are things?

IAN: Ryan? Yeah, excellent. Excited to talk about, I think, the more pragmatic side of what is a topic that I'm not that keen on.

RYAN: Okay, sure. Well, goal setting, it's an interesting topic. I think for some people it can feel really abstract, and some people maybe don't know very much about it. But I guess when you're setting up an online business, what are kind of your big-term, long picture goals that you should be thinking about at the beginning?

IAN: The reason that I wanted to take this on is because this is an enormous body of, there's an enormous body of literature out there on goal setting. I think there's a lot of things that's over-engineered and over-architected. Hopefully, my contribution will be to people that are starting and looking at investing in websites, and they think they're too busy.

I don't know anyone that thinks that they have more than 168 hours in a week that they can suddenly somehow steal from to make this investment. The real question is, kind of, what's the framework that you can use to think about how to try to find some extra time so that you can make progress in this area. That's where I think I can add some pearls of wisdom, or at least things that have worked for me.

RYAN: In terms of framework, what's kind of your, do you have a framework for long-term kind of big picture stuff?

IAN: We're, yeah, I mean, I think about long-term big picture stuff for sure. I think in our business we think kind of in 90-day chunks. My wife and I just kind of sat down and agreed on what the next 90 days look like so that we can kind of do some planning. But that is kind of for ongoing stuff. What someone listening to this might be worried about or be thinking about is how do they kind of they don't have something that's up and running already they would need to build their knowledge base, they want to get involved in this. How are they going to kind of find the time? No one has enough time.

Look, the reality is that if you want to succeed you have to control your calendar. What is really important? And I mean, really? Is it provided for in the way you allocate your time? If you show me your calendar, I'll show you your priorities. Now, all right, with that said, we are all dealing with what I call the non-negotiables in life. You've got a job that is nonnegotiable. That job can have expanding or contracting requirements for you on any given week. You've got family responsibilities. You've got your health to deal with. This is something that kind of for me is always the one that I need to think hard about because I need to invest more in my health. It's always been troubling for me.

Then there's a financial nonnegotiable that you have to deal with. Kind of how do you think about setting goals where you've got things expanding to fill the 168 hours a week that we all have to kind of deal with? I kind of like to do a few different things. First, spend five minutes, and you can do this on paper, which is great, or I'm a walker. If you go for a walk you can just do it mentally. But do it kind of a mental brain dump in all of those categories of what's going on. Kind of confront your demons, if you will. What's on your

mind in all of those things. Next to business and the personal stuff, but just get it clear as to what the conflict is.

I like to keep a tab every week of the things that go right. Oftentimes it just seems like you're kind of under the gun. I'm not very good at celebrating successes. When there is something that I'm successful at or that we complete, for goodness sakes, I like to celebrate it. If you combine action number one with the brain dump with action number two, celebrating some of these successes, now you have, I think, a foundation where you can be constructive at approaching how you're going to go forward.

Now you're looking and you're saying, okay, what am I stuck on? I've got these things and some of them are urgent, some of them are important, and you want to focus on the things that are urgent and important. That's the framework. One of the reasons that I like physical goods eCommerce so much is it's scalable, and you can utilize a global pool of outsourced talent. I can tell you that what we do in growing our business, my wife and I, when we have ever had conflicts it's because we're always trying to figure out which one of us was going to do it, as opposed to trying to figure out how to delegate it.

To give you a great example, right now, as I sit here today I have a memo that I need to write that I cannot delegate. I can do it outside of work, but I have to do it myself. On pretty much everything in our business, I try to use the strategic coach framework which is who not how. Not how am I going to do it, not how is my wife going to do it, but who can we find to do this that we can delegate it to?

If you're going to, if you want to grow, you're going to have to get leverage on your time. The best way to do that is just constantly go back to figuring out how you can get leverage through using other people, who not how. That's the way that I deal with it. I would say the one cheat that I have or the one thing that I might be able to add, and I mentioned this to a few people who have pinged me later and said, "Hey, that made sense to me," is I can go a week, I can go longer and not really make progress on some of the bigger picture things that I want to do. But kind of every day I wake up and try to do one thing. I find that my mental framework is positive, and I won't go stale. I won't just shut down my progress if I just do one thing.

That one thing could be getting up a little bit early and listening to a podcast. It could be reading a chapter in a book. It could be stealing a few minutes at work to look at a spreadsheet that I might want to look at. It could be calling and connecting with someone. It all depends on what my priorities are. But if I make positive progress on one thing when I'm massively busy, I will not go several days or weeks without making progress because I've checked out mentally. That would be the things that I would offer up as cheats.

Now, career professionals, corporate executives like myself, the month of January you start off kind of looking at the past year. We go through performance appraisals. We've got budgets that we're dealing with; right now the one I'm dealing with is pretty ugly, we're in a battle over that. We're going to go into kind of bonus pools, and we're going to go into kind of objectives for the next year.

In the corporate world and in the career professionals, everybody is doing this in their day job, a little bit different construct. These types of things are kind of institutionalized in that world very well. For people that don't have that experience, or for people that just don't want to replicate the pain and the mind numbing pain of going through that, I'll offer up what I think are the ways I think that you can make progress which just to figure out kind of how to work around the non-negotiables. How to make a little bit of progress every day. The key being, for me, to get leverage on your time by figuring out a construct where you can, on a daily basis, make progress but also figure out how you can leverage other people's times and talents, for your benefit.

Something that people ask me a lot is what's my five year plan. I was thinking about that in terms of eCommerce. I was wondering if that's even relevant in the world of eCommerce because things are changing so much faster these days. Is it even helpful to think a year out or five years out any more? Is the world changing too quickly?

Well, look. The reality for me was that in 2014 when I relocated, I could see my corporate career coming to an end. When you see that happening, or maybe you've decided you want your career to come to an end. You want to become location independent and be a digital, maybe you hate going to your job, and you want to do something different. Having a plan for five

years out is highly relevant. But the way you're going to get there is one foot in front of the other every day. If you don't wake up and think about where you want to be at some point in the future, no trip starts out without kind of a destination.

RYAN: Great. If we go really small focus with goal setting, if we think about a lot of people who work online work from home. You just think about maybe the eight to 10 to 12 hours you set aside for one day to get work done, and you don't want to waste the day. Do you have any strategies for just keeping yourself productive and on track over the course of a workday if you're working from home?

IAN: Yeah, yeah. Actually my wife does work from home. She's grappled with this more than I have. When I say grapple, it's grappling because, and I feel for people because when you're at home there's all kinds of distractions and activities. The people that I've spoken to, what they do is they hold themselves accountable by measuring their time. There are, we use for our customer service people something called Hubstaff where we can watch what their activities are.

My wife can look at what her Hubstaff score is, she will focus like a laser on working, and she will look at her Hubstaff score to see how productive she was. That's something where when you're cognizant that you're tracking yourself, it's kind of like being on a diet and getting on the scale ever morning. When you're cognizant of that, you're kind of probably in a better frame of mind. There's a program called RescueTime where if you're on Facebook for three hours or something like that, you know you've violated your own covenant to yourself.

I think people that work from home have to kind of figure out what works for them. For my wife, we watch our employees, and she has a natural population she competes with to try to track her scores. On the one hand that's just kind of it doesn't necessarily, well, it does not measure the impactfulness or the amount of impact that she has, but it does help you avoid distractions and to stay focused. You're going to be responsible for setting the priorities, but it does help you stay on focus.

Now, I'm a big believer in time off and downtime and quiet time and reading and things like that, and thinking. I'm a big believer in that and, obviously, computer programs don't kind of can't judge that for you. Like anything in life, you have to mix best practices, and then kind of step back and see if you're actually executing on where you want to go with whatever your scheme is.

RYAN: Great. Once you set up your goals, when you actually get to start working on them, you have to prioritize which goals you're going to focus on and how you spend your time that way. Do you have any tips for us on how you prioritize your goals?

IAN: Yeah, I mentioned the kind of the urgent/important quadrant. We are probably way too focused on things that are urgent. There's always something that is a low priority that must be dealt with right away, it's urgent. You have to keep focus on what the things are that are important that will really move the dial and make progress on those. One of my favorite sayings is that we overestimate what we can do in a short period of time, but we underestimate what we can do in a long period of time.

That goes back to my premise that if you do something every day, one year from today you'll be blown away with where you're at. You'll probably be, in any 90-day period of time, you'll probably be disappointed. But in a year if you really stick with it, I don't care if it's lifting weights or if it's dieting or if it's coming up to the curve on kind of your eCommerce goals, if you stick with it and make progress every day, and you're unrelenting about this one little thing every day, you'll be very delighted with the progress you've made. You can get that through communities, you can get that through forums.

In my case, my wife and I hold each other accountable. I have other people that I have conversations with. I have coaches that I have accountability to that I pay regularly that I have deliverables to. I'm a big believer in having that accountability because without it I think we're all somewhat lazy, or I can get lazy. But just going back to kind of one of the main premises, control the calendar.

When I moved overseas I no longer watched three hours of football every Sunday. I'm an idiot on that stuff. I've never watched "Game of Thrones."

Netflix I probably have spent too much time on Netflix over the holidays relaxing, and I've got to get back to being more focused on moving the ball forward, so I know that I've been falling down. We all have 168 hours, we all have the non-negotiables. Celebrate when you have free hours of that 168, and be very vigilant to try to make progress when you know your maxed out with the non-negotiables with regards to your 168 hours.

One of the themes that you're kind of talking about that keeps coming up is it sounds like you set time to go back and look at the progress that you've made. Whether that's celebrating your victories or checking in with your wife or your coaches, that sounds like a valuable practice.

For me, yes, it's valuable for me to look back on things that work and that I can feel good about. It's motivating for me. I can get in my head and be struggling with something and lose picture of the fact that, gosh, we had a great year in 2018. Look where we were a year ago today, and we're way ahead of that. I can look back and have had three, or four, or five bad days and be depressed by that. You can't do that, on the one hand. On the other hand, the ability to keep me on track requires that I have accountability to coaches and to myself. I kind of build this accountability framework so that I sort of that I do stay on track. It's just, it works for me.

RYAN: Great. This last question is going to be kind of a little off the beaten track here a little bit, but we're going to attach this in the show notes. Tim Ferriss gave a big TED talk a couple years ago about how he does fear setting rather than goal setting, and how he processes what he's afraid of, and he uses those to set his goals. I was just wondering if you wanted to comment on that? What role does fear play as we kind of look into the future, or as we set goals? What does that look like for you?

IAN: I saw his talk on that, and I think that his talk generally and when you look at the four hour work week, it was generally to look at people and that book was published in 2006, or 2007, or 2008. There was a population of people where jobs weren't available, or where they were at the age where there was a lot of kind of soul searching. What Ferriss' perspective was, look, if you're early in your career and you're not taking risks, you're probably missing opportunities because early in your career you don't have the downside that you do later in your career.

To be honest with you, I would flip it and say that if you're not taking risks later in your career, you're going to be out of luck. You better start to deal with the fact that later in your career there's 100 things stacked against you, not the least of which is ageism. The way corporations ruthlessly manage their professional staff, and the fact that kind of longevity is telescoping out. The economy can affect you later in your career negatively because you don't have that much time, much more than it can be more than it can affect you earlier in your career. I think fear setting is a very valuable concept. I probably look at it a little bit differently than it was laid out in the four hour work week in that talk but very valuable, for sure.

RYAN: All right, great. We filled a whole podcast talking about goals, you did it. Is there anything else you want to say before we sign off?

IAN: Well, hopefully, this was a pragmatist's view of things because I think it's an incredible rabbit hole you can go down. James Clear is kind of the king of this topic. He's wonderful and writes a lot of different things about habits, forming habits, believe all of it. I think you have to find what works for you. This is what's worked for me. Make a little bit of progress every day and figure out how you can get leverage on your time. You're going to be, a year from today you're going to be surprised at where you're at. You won't lose your sanity if you congratulate yourself every so often on some of the progress you've made.

RYAN: Good, good. All right, thanks Ian. I guess we'll see you next week on the show.

IAN: Thank you, Ryan. Good to catch up with you and you look great in that blazer.

RYAN: Thanks, man. All right, we'll see you.

RYAN: All right, folks, there you have it. That wraps up my conversation with Ian Bond, of Professional Website Investors. He shared a ton of valuable insights and advice today on different ways to set goals, prioritize your tasks, and reflect on your progress. We also shared some tools and resources, which will all be linked up in the show notes at ProfessionalWebsiteInvestors.com. I hope you enjoyed our conversation.

Please consider subscribing, sharing with a friend, or leaving us a review in your favorite podcast directory. Until next time, best of luck in all that you do. We'll look forward to seeing you on the next episode of the Professional Website Investors podcast.

© Copyright 2017-2020 ProfessionalWebsiteInvestors.com All rights reserved.



**BUY & SCALE
E-COMMERCE SITES
INTO SEMI-PASSIVE INCOME**