

Episode 12: How to Stay Focused on Marketing So You Can Get Back Into the Studio

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Hi there. I'm Cindy and this is the Art Marketing Project Podcast, where I empower artists to take the reins of marketing and selling their own work. On today's episode, I want to talk to you about a subject that I know you deal with just like I do: staying focused on marketing so you can get back to doing the things that only you can do. I know for you, that's creating art. Regardless of how hard I try, I regularly find myself going off into the weeds rather than doing my marketing work. Yeah, it happens to me, even though I'm somebody who's been doing marketing work for decades. Whether it's social media, reading a new story, and then following the bait on the next two or maybe six news stories, or even "productive procrastination," that's what I call it, which is clearing out your email inbox or sorting through random things just to not have to do the work that you know you need to do.

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I know I'm not the only one who has trouble staying focused on marketing and I know it's even harder for you, the artist, who just isn't as excited about marketing as somebody like me is. So today, this episode is how to stay focused on marketing and get back into the studio. I'm sharing with you a few ways that I've found to stay focused on your most important tasks. This is specifically focused on marketing of course, so you can get back to what you want to be doing and what you should be doing, the important things for you, the things that only you can be doing in your business. Before we get started, I just want to remind you that you can always find all of the links that I mention in this episode's show notes at artmarketingproject.com/12. All right, so let's get into it.

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Number one is to have a plan. When you have a plan that you're following, it's much easier to determine what you need to be doing today, and in the next hour, and in the next week. I know I talk about why having a plan is important. I talk about it many times from the perspective of having a marketing plan. Because that's a big part of what I teach, being strategic about your marketing rather than just flying by the seat of your pants, but I'm also a big fan of planning to achieve your goals. I'm a big proponent of a book called the **12 Week Year**, which I'll link for you in the show notes, and it essentially says forget planning for a year. That's just too far away to set accomplishable goals and figure out what you need to be doing to reach those goals. But instead, plan for the next three months or 12 weeks, because it's just to set goals and it makes them more achievable.

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I use this system in my business daily. The simple overview of what I do is that I create a six-week goals and plans document, and yes, I do it in six-week increments, because for me it's just more manageable to cut that 12 weeks in half. Then each week, I create a weekly plan that's based on and pulled from that bigger

six-week plan. Then each day, I pull out a post it note and I decide what my big three things are that I have to get done and I write them on the post it note.

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This system isn't completely fool proof, because sometimes I get too busy to even pay attention to my plans or planning, or just fall off the wagon a bit, it happens to all of us, but it's the best system I've ever used and it doesn't require you buying expensive planners, or big binders, or anything that, you know from somebody else, really what you're doing is just creating in whatever program you have on your computer, Microsoft Word or Pages on your Mac, and just creating these documents and setting up a little bit of a structure for yourself.

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If you want to grab a copy, I've created some templates for you if you'd like to do this for a six-week plan and a weekly plan. **You can download my free six week planning tools file at artmarketingproject.com/planningtools, and I'll link that in the show notes as well so you can just go over there and get that link.**

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Then number two, number two is batching your work. I talk about social media a lot and one of my big recommendations on that topic is to spend one to two hours every couple of weeks creating your social media posts. You can schedule them as well if you're using a scheduling tool like Tailwind. That's my favorite tool that I use for scheduling Instagram posts, or SmarterQueue, which is my favorite tool for managing Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. But this whole idea of batching your social media content can be applied to so many different things in your business.

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If you plan on sending an email a week to your audience, you can sit one hour during the week and batch create the themes for the emails, and then maybe an additional hour you can spend drafting the outlines, and then one more hour writing each of the emails and getting them scheduled. You could do that maybe in a two to three hour block once a month. You could block out an hour once a week to focus on email specific tasks. You can batch reaching out to prospects for networking or for partnerships. You could say, "During the month, I'm going to spend two hours the first week of the month, reaching out to new connections," and just set yourself the time to do it, and if you have 10 people on your list to reach out to, reach out to all 10. Get it done and check it off.

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The reason why that's really great is because it allows you to be hyper focused on that particular task. When say you're reaching out to potential partners, you write one email, you can take that email as a template and send it to the next person and send it to the person after that. The same thing with writing your social media content. You can get into that flow state where it just feels easier for you. This is really important for those of you who don't love the marketing work because if you can get into that flow state where things feel easier, it's just going to have less friction, you're going to feel more inclined to do that work, which is important because as a business owner, if you want to sell your work, one of your primary goals, one of your primary tasks in your business is marketing. Because without marketing, you're not going to sell anything.

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All right, tip number three, decide how much time you can devote to marketing.

As a small business owner, it's easy to spend 50% of your time on marketing activities or more. Honestly, you should be spending a good chunk of time on marketing if you want your sales to be at the level that you're looking for and if you want to build your audience the way you need to to sell your work. But to reign in the amount of marketing time that you spend, block off time in your calendar and stick to the plan. If you say, "I'm going to spend 10 hours a week on marketing," and you have a plan with a list of things that you need to do, then your job is to get those tasks done within that time period. That way you'll be less likely to allow marketing to take over your life.

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Then calculate how much time you can make available for marketing and outline your ideal week. Start by reserving studio time, and then time with your friends and family, and time for the other necessities in life. Of course for me, one of the necessities in life, especially for an entrepreneur and small business owner is to block off some take care of you time, because it's super important. But then once you have that blocked out on your calendar, then schedule time for marketing and business tasks during times that work for you and you can feel like you're in that flow state with marketing. Personally, I don't like to work on marketing work early in the morning because just in the morning I don't have what it takes to be able to write creative content. I tend to schedule that work for around lunchtime and early afternoon.

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Tip number four is to hire help for the work that you either can't manage or you don't want to manage. No business owner can be the creator, the CEO, and the marketing director, and honestly the chief financial officer, and all of those things all in one, so trying to go it alone is challenging at best and probably going to hurt you in the end at the worst. Hiring help is the best way to free yourself up to spend more time doing the things that only you can do, which for you is creating art, engaging with patrons, creating new business opportunities. So, know your own strengths and your capacity and then consider hiring help for tasks like content

writing, email management, social media marketing, photo editing appointment scheduling, website updates, or even managing your Shopify or other Ecommerce account. You can find people to do all the photo editing for you once you've photographed your artwork.

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Then start by considering how long it takes you to produce a piece of art and what price your art sells for. Basically what you're going to do is divide that, how much time you spend and how much a piece of art sells for. If you're art sells for \$300 and it takes you say, make it easy, three hours to create it, then that's \$100 an hour. Well, if you're paying somebody to help you with marketing tasks that allows you to do more of the work that's going to bring you the hundred dollars an hour, then it seems like it's worth it to bring someone in to take some of those lower value tasks off your plate.

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Tip number five is use technology to help you. I have a couple of things that I actually really enjoy, just helping me keep on task. One of them is called Focus Keeper. It's an app for my smartphone. I don't know if they have it, I have it on my iPhone, I don't know if they have it for other phones but I would assume they do. It is an app that uses the Pomodoro method for, it's basically you have set work periods and then a set amount of like a minute break in between. Then once you complete five focused work periods, you get kind of a longer break. **You can look up the Pomodoro method. I can link it here in the show notes as well.** But the Focus Keeper app on your phone, I use that when I'm having one of those days where I just can't get started. I know I need to and I can't make myself do it. So, I open up focus keeper and I set the timer, and then I say to myself, and I think it's like five minute doing important work and not procrastinating and fiddling around, honestly.

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That's one that I love. The other technology helper that I really like, I believe it's called **News Feed Eradicator for Facebook, and I'll link that in the show notes here as well.** What it does for me, I spend a lot of time on Facebook because I have a Facebook group for my members of the Art Marketing Project, so I engage with my members. I'm in a number of other groups in Facebook, the coaching group that I'm involved in that I'm being coached in. It really helps keep me from that social media scroll that can take you away from doing the work that you need to be doing. What News Feed Eradicator does is it basically wipes away your newsfeed when you log into Facebook and what you see is a motivational quote for the day. I honestly love it. I can still go browse Facebook on my phone or Instagram, but for whatever reason I'm not as inclined to do that, so I don't feel like I have to put a wall up for myself on my phone as much as I do on my desktop.

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Then one of the other things I really like, it can be very easy to get yourself into a mode of checking email and telling yourself you're working. What I do is on Gmail, which is the email service that I use for my business, on Gmail, you can set it up to

where it automatically, you know once you delete or respond to one email, it automatically forwarded to the next email, so it kind of gets you into this like, "Here's the email, respond, hit delete, and then the next one comes up," so it kind of gets you into a quick kind of one after another pattern and it's really an easy way I think to clear your email inbox fairly quickly and not get distracted by staring at the whole list of messages in your inbox and trying to decide which one you want to tackle.

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There are a few settings here in my Gmail that maybe I'll look up here and include in the show notes for you as well. Just a few tips like the auto advance feature where Gmail will suggest a response for people. I have that turned on in Gmail so I can just hit a kind of crafted response that Gmail has come up with. Then the other thing is when you hit send on an email through Gmail, if you're responding to somebody else's email, you can set up to where your send button, you have the option to just hit send or to hit send and archive, which means hit send and delete the email for me. So, it gets it right out of your inbox with just one quick, which I really like as well. It really helps me get through my email and not be a "productive procrastinator." That's something which is probably one of the biggest challenges for me is telling myself that I am working when I'm really just piddling through stuff and trying to make myself feel good like I'm actually doing something worthwhile.

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Those are my five tips for you. **My action step for you for this episode is to go out there and download my six week planning tools freebie and create your first six weeks or 12 week plan, whatever works for you, and your weekly plan. Then go grab a copy of the 12 Week Year book and give it a read.** I would love to hear from you. Send me a message on Instagram. Let me know how this whole, especially the 12 week book and the planning approach, is working for you and any of these other recommendations that I have. Remember that you can find all of the links that I mentioned in this episode in the show notes artmarketingproject.com/12. Thank you so much for listening today. I look forward to catching you next week.

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