Marketing, Media & Money Magazine

Q3 2026

Accessible Wealth Is More Valuable Than Accumulated Wealth:

Why Liquidity May Matter More Than Your Net Worth

Mission-Driven Business.

What We Stand For, Who We Serve & Why It Matters Now

The $27,000 Invoice I Almost Didn't Send

More Sales Won't Fix This

Why & How a ROCKIN' Landing Page Can Help You Sell More

Creating Strategic Impact Through Business and Community Collaboration

Meet Jess Sato...

The story behind her mission and the conviction that shaped it.

A Special Message from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

Welcome to **Q3 of Marketing, Media & Money Magazine,** an issue dedicated to something every successful business owner eventually begins to ask:

What am I really building?

Success has a way of changing our questions.
In the beginning, we're focused on gaining clients, increasing revenue, building credibility, and proving that our business can succeed.
But as our businesses grow, so do we.

Eventually, the question shifts from **"How do I build something successful?"** to **"How do I build something meaningful?"**

That's where this issue begins. Throughout these pages, you'll notice a common thread. Whether we're talking about marketing, money, leadership, operations, community impact, or business growth, every article points back to one idea:

The strongest businesses are built with intention.

You'll discover why selling more isn't always the answer, how accessible wealth creates greater freedom than accumulated wealth, why mission brings clarity to leadership, how strategic collaboration creates lasting impact, and why even something as practical as a landing page should be designed with purpose.

Because strategy matters. But strategy without purpose eventually loses its direction.

Mission gives business a center. It shapes the decisions we make, the people we serve, the partnerships we pursue, and the legacy we leave behind. Perhaps that's the greatest shift many entrepreneurs experience after achieving success.

We stop asking, **"What's next?"** We begin asking, **"What matters most?"**

I believe those are the businesses that create the greatest impact—not because they're the biggest, but because they're built with clarity, conviction, and intention.

My hope is that every issue of Marketing, Media & Money becomes more than something you read, it becomes something you return to whenever you need fresh perspective, practical strategy, and the confidence to take your next step.

As you turn these pages, pay attention to the ideas that stay with you long after you've finished reading. They just might be pointing you toward your next chapter.

With deep appreciation,

patty farmer

Editor-in-Chief, *Marketing, Media, & Money*
Founder/CEO, M3 Creative Marketing
🎯 Relationship-First Marketing.
AI Insights. Human-Led Strategy.

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Mission-Driven Business.

What We Stand For, Who We Serve Why It Matters Now

> "A mission-driven business is not measured only by what it earns. It is measured by what it makes possible."
>
> ~ *patty farmer*

For many women entrepreneurs, there comes a point when success is no longer the only question.

The business is working. The revenue is real. The reputation has been built. The rooms have been entered. Expertise is undeniable.

And yet, somewhere along the way, a deeper question begins to surface:

What is all of this for?

Not in a dismissive way. Not from burnout or lack of gratitude. But from a place of maturity, clarity, and honest reflection.

Because once a woman has built a certain level of success, she often starts measuring her business differently. She still cares about profitability. She still wants growth, opportunity, freedom, and financial strength.

But money is no longer the only driver.

Meaning matters more.

Contribution matters more.

Alignment matters more.

The way she uses her voice, visibility, relationships, expertise, and revenue begins to matter in a different way.

That is where mission-driven business begins.

What Is a Mission-Driven Business?

A mission-driven business is not simply a business with a polished mission statement.

It is a business where what you stand for shapes how you build, how you lead, who you serve, what you say yes to, what you say no to, and how you define success in this season of your work.

Mission-driven business is not a slogan tucked away on a website. It is not a sentence created because it sounds good in brand messaging. It is not a charitable add-on to make a business appear more meaningful.

A true mission-driven business allows mission to influence the business model, the client experience, the relationships, the offers, the decisions, and the way growth is pursued.

It asks better questions:

Who are we here to serve?

What do we stand for?

What kind of difference are we here to make?

How does our business create value beyond sales?

Those questions matter because when mission is clear, business becomes more focused, more human, and more meaningful.

Why Mission Matters More for Women Entrepreneurs Now

For me, mission has always been rooted in women.

I was raised in a family of four girls, and I have six daughters. That alone has shaped how I see the world, how I understand opportunity, and why I care so deeply about women using their voices, owning their expertise, and building businesses that support the lives they want to live.

Over the years, I have watched women build incredible businesses while still questioning whether they are allowed to be fully seen.

I have watched women minimize their brilliance, overgive their expertise, hide behind the work, or wait for someone else to open the door.

And I have also watched what happens when the right woman finally claims her voice, steps into her visibility, and allows her business to become a vehicle for something bigger than herself.

That is impact.

Not necessarily in the traditional sense. Not always through a nonprofit, formal cause, or global initiative.

Sometimes impact looks like a woman becoming visible enough to open doors for others.

Sometimes it looks like a business model that supports her family, her team, her clients, and her community.

Sometimes it looks like speaking the truth in a room where other women have been waiting for permission to say it too.

Sometimes it looks like building relationships that create opportunity, collaboration, revenue, referrals, and ripple effects far beyond one transaction.

That is the kind of impact I care about.

People-First Profit:
Why Profit Still Matters

My belief is simple:

People first. Then profit.

Not because profit does not matter.

It absolutely does.

A business that is not profitable cannot be sustainable.
And a woman who is constantly under-resourced cannot fully serve, lead, give, create, or expand.

But profit should support people, not at their expense.

That belief has shaped the way I build, the way I serve, and the way I think about marketing.

I do not believe business owners need to choose between profitability and people. In fact, the strongest businesses are built to honor both.

That is what I mean by people-first profit.

People-first profit is the belief that a business can be financially strong without becoming extractive, disconnected, or dehumanizing. It is growth that supports the woman behind the business, the clients she serves, the communities she influences, and the impact she wants to create.

Why Marketing Is Really About Trust, Not Just Attention

I never believed marketing was simply about getting attention.

Attention is easy to chase and exhausting to maintain.

For me, marketing has always been about connection, clarity, trust, and opportunity.

It is about helping the right women be seen, heard, understood, trusted, referred, invited, and chosen for the work they are here to do.

It is about helping women stop hiding behind credentials, content, and busyness, and start communicating the deeper value of who they are, what they believe, and why their work matters.

That is why mission matters in marketing and business growth.

Without mission, growth can become scattered.

Visibility can become noise.

Revenue can become the only measurement.

Opportunities can become distractions.

Leadership can become reactive instead of intentional.

But when a woman is clear about her mission, everything begins to sharpen.

She becomes more discerning about the rooms she enters.

More intentional about the relationships she builds.

More strategic about the platforms she uses.

More grounded in the way she communicates.

More willing to say no to opportunities that look good but pull her away from what she is here to create.

Mission gives business a center.

Mission-Driven Growth Requires Better Questions

Mission-driven business does not mean everything becomes easier.

In many ways, it makes the decisions more honest.

A mission-driven business owner must ask deeper questions:

Does this align with what I stand for?

Does this serve the people I am here to serve?

Does this business model support the life I want to live and the difference I want to make?

Am I building from clarity or simply responding to pressure?

Am I using my voice in a way that creates trust, opportunity, and meaningful change?

Those are not just branding questions.

They are leadership questions.

And right now, they matter more than ever.

We are building businesses in a world that is loud, uncertain, fast-moving, and often deeply reactive. People are consuming more, trusting less, deciding more slowly, and looking for something steady enough to believe in.

In that kind of environment, clarity is not a luxury.

It is a responsibility.

Clarity is Leadership Responsibility

A mission-driven business does not need to have an opinion on everything.

It does not need to be the loudest voice in the room.

It does not need to chase every trend, respond to every headline, or prove its values through performative language.

But it does need to know what it stands for.

It needs to know who it serves.

It needs to know why the work matters.

It needs to know how the business creates value beyond the sale.

Because the women I work with are not just trying to build bigger businesses. They are trying to build more meaningful ones.

They have already achieved success, but they are not finished.

They are not ready to simply talk about legacy as though their best work is behind them.

They still have rooms to enter, voices to use, ideas to share, businesses to grow, relationships to build, and impact to create.

They are in the season between success and legacy.

They are building for significance.

From Success to Significance

Success asks, **"What have I built?"**

Significance asks, **"What does what I have built make possible?"**

That is the shift I see many successful women entrepreneurs making right now.

They are no longer building only for more revenue, more visibility, or more recognition. They are asking how their business can create more meaning, more opportunity, more freedom, and more impact.

This is not about abandoning ambition.

It is about elevating it.

It is about recognizing that the next level of business is not always about doing more. Sometimes it is about making what you already do matter more.

And significance requires a different kind of strategy.

It requires more than visibility. It requires the right visibility.

It requires more than revenue. It requires revenue with a ripple effect.

It requires more than expertise. It requires the courage to communicate what that expertise makes possible.

It requires more than networking.
It requires relationships built on trust, alignment, and shared opportunity.

It requires more than a business model that works on paper. It requires a business model that supports the woman behind the business and the people she is here to serve.

The Work I Care About

This is the work I care about:

Helping women use their voice, visibility, relationships, and revenue to create meaningful impact.

Helping them build businesses that support the life they want to live and the difference they want to make.

Helping them move from success to significance without losing themselves in the process.

Because mission-driven business is not about abandoning profit.

It is about giving profit a purpose.

It is about building with intention.

It is about remembering that behind every strategy, every offer, every platform, every partnership, and every sale, there are people.

People who need what we know.

People who are changed by the spaces we create.

People who are watching to see what is possible.

People who benefit when women with wisdom, experience, and heart choose to stop playing small.

What Does Your Success Make Possible?

That is why what we stand for matters.

That is why who we serve matters.

That is why how we build matters.

Because a mission-driven business is not measured only by what it earns.

It is measured by what it makes possible.

And for the women who are ready for their next chapter, that may be the most important question of all:

What does your success now make possible?

M3 Creative Marketing

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Accessible Wealth Is More Valuable Than Accumulated Wealth

Why Liquidity May Matter More Than Your Net Worth

Samantha (Sam) Irish

The wealthiest people don't always have the most freedom.

At first glance, that statement feels backward.

After all, isn't that the point of building wealth? To create more choices, more opportunities, and ultimately, more freedom?

Yet after spending decades helping successful families navigate retirement, we've discovered something surprising. Some of the people with the largest balance sheets are also the ones who feel the most constrained. They have accumulated remarkable wealth, but when an opportunity arises, a family member needs help, or life simply changes course, they find themselves asking a question they never expected to ask:

"Where should the money come from?"

It's rarely because they haven't saved enough.

More often, it's because their wealth has accumulated exceptionally well, but it was never intentionally designed to provide flexibility. Their assets have appreciated. Their retirement accounts have grown. Their businesses have become more valuable. Their real estate has flourished.

On paper, everything looks exactly as it should.

But the ability to access that wealth without creating taxes, penalties, market disruption, or unintended consequences is an entirely different conversation.

That's where many financial plans begin to reveal their limitations.

In our first article, we introduced the philosophy behind our proprietary Power of Three methodology and challenged the traditional approach to retirement planning. Last quarter, we explored the first pillar: Income, and why income is not simply the outcome of a successful career, but the engine that powers every financial decision that follows.

When income is intentionally designed, something remarkable happens. It creates freedom. Freedom to retire when you're ready, freedom to enjoy the lifestyle you've worked so hard to build, and freedom to stop asking your investment portfolio to carry the entire weight of your future.

But once that foundation is in place, another question naturally follows.

Can your money move when your life does?

This quarter, I'd like to introduce the second pillar.

Liquidity.

Because while Income creates freedom, **Liquidity puts you in control.**

For decades, we've all been taught to measure financial success by one number: net worth.

How much is in your investment accounts?

How much is your business worth?

How much equity do you have in your home?

Those numbers become the scoreboard. And while they certainly matter, they don't tell the entire story.

At Compass Financial, we often ask a different question:

How much of your wealth is actually designed to go to work for you today?

That question usually changes the conversation.

Because someone can have a $5 million net worth and still struggle to access the money they need without creating taxes, penalties, market disruption, or unintended consequences. They are wealthy on paper, but they aren't necessarily financially flexible.

Most traditional financial planning focuses on accumulation.

At Compass Financial, we believe accessibility must be designed with the same level of intention.

Because wealth trapped inside the wrong assets is still trapped.

Recently, we met with a business owner who had built what many would consider an extraordinary financial life. Between his company, investment accounts, retirement plans, commercial real estate, and personal residence, his net worth exceeded $8 million.

As we talked through his goals, I asked a simple question.

"If your daughter called tomorrow with an opportunity to purchase into the business she'd always dreamed of joining, and she needed $750,000... where would the money come from?"

He smiled confidently at first.

Then he paused.

The answer wasn't nearly as obvious as he expected.

Eventually, he began working through the possibilities out loud.

"We could sell some investments."

"We could refinance the building."

"I suppose we could take distributions from our retirement accounts."

Every solution created another problem.

Selling investments meant capital gains.

Retirement distributions meant additional taxable income.

Refinancing meant taking on debt.

Waiting for the right market meant delaying the opportunity altogether.
None of the assets were bad.
In fact, they had performed exceptionally well over the years. The problem wasn't what he owned.

The problem was that everything had been accumulated, but very little had been intentionally coordinated.

He wasn't lacking wealth.

He was lacking access.

And that realization changes everything.

Because liquidity isn't really about cash.

It's about putting you in control.

It's the ability to help a child without wondering which account creates the smallest tax bill. It's the confidence to pursue a business opportunity without disrupting your long-term investment strategy. It's replacing a roof, caring for an aging parent, supporting a charitable organization, or taking the family vacation you've talked about for years, not because it's convenient, but because your financial life was intentionally designed to give you those choices.

One of the biggest obstacles to that flexibility is something many people don't think about until it's too late.

Taxes.

Most people view taxes as something that happens aftera financial decision has already been made.

We believe taxes should help shape the decision before it's ever made.

Many people's largest financial assets are their retirement accounts.

But unlike a brokerage account, that balance isn't entirely theirs. Every future withdrawal carries an invisible partner: the IRS. The balance you see on your statement is not necessarily the amount you'll ultimately be able to spend.

That's why we often ask clients a different question.

Would you rather pay tax on the seed... or the harvest?

Because every dollar that continues to grow inside a taxable account is growing for two owners.

You.

And eventually, the government.

Designing liquidity isn't simply about keeping more cash in the bank.

In fact, too much cash can create its own set of challenges. Inflation quietly erodes purchasing power, and dollars sitting idle rarely accomplish everything they're capable of.

The goal isn't more cash.

The goal is more accessible wealth.

That's an important distinction.

At Compass Financial, we often say that money cannot do more than one job well simultaneously. Yet many financial plans unknowingly ask the same dollars to provide income, long-term growth, emergency access, tax efficiency, and a legacy for the next generation.

Eventually, something has to give.

One of the ways we've helped solve that challenge is by intentionally incorporating properly designed permanent life insurance into the liquidity pillar of the Power of Three.

For many people, life insurance has always been viewed as something that benefits everyone else. You pay the premiums, and your family receives the benefit.

But today's permanent life insurance can do far more than provide a death benefit.

For many people, life insurance has always been viewed as something that benefits everyone else. You pay the premiums, and your family receives the benefit.

But today's permanent life insurance can do far more than provide a death benefit.

When structured correctly, it creates a pool of capital that can be accessed throughout your lifetime, often on a tax-advantaged basis. That means it can provide liquidity when opportunities arise, help navigate unexpected expenses, and create flexibility without forcing you to interrupt your long-term investment strategy.

Suddenly, your investment portfolio no longer has to do every job.

Your retirement accounts no longer become the first place you look for every withdrawal.

Each asset is allowed to do what it was designed to do.

And that's where real power begins.

The purpose of the second pillar has never been simply to create liquidity.

It's to create options; for how you save, spend and grow your wealth.

Options create confidence.

And confidence changes behavior.

When families know they have accessible resources positioned intentionally, they make decisions differently. They invest differently. They give differently. They retire differently. They stop asking, *"Can we afford to?"* and begin asking, *"Is this the best way to accomplish what matters most?"*

As we've explored throughout this series, one of the greatest mistakes in financial planning is asking a single asset to do every job.

For most of our financial lives, we've asked growth to do everything. We've expected our investments to build our retirement, protect our future, pay for emergencies, outpace inflation, replace our paycheck, and eventually provide an inheritance for the next generation.

That's simply too much to ask of any investment strategy.

When Income provides freedom and Liquidity creates control, now something remarkable happens.

Growth is finally released from responsibilities it was never designed to carry.

And when growth is finally allowed to do the one job it was always meant to do, it creates something far more meaningful than returns.

It creates possibilities you may have never thought were within reach.

Possibilities for your family.

Possibilities for your business.

Possibilities for your legacy.

Next quarter, we'll conclude our Power of Three series by exploring the final pillar: **Growth.** We'll explore how intentional growth doesn't simply build wealth; it expands the possibilities of what your wealth can ultimately accomplish.

About the Authors

Samantha Irish is the co-founder of Compass Financial and co-host of Navigate Your Wealth. A Generational Wealth Specialist, she brings fresh perspective, empathy, and clarity to retirement strategy. With a background in communications and consulting, Sam helps clients reimagine retirement as a chapter of purpose and freedom — offering guidance that honors both legacy and life's most personal transitions.

Karen Stawicki is the co-founder of Compass Financial and co-host of Navigate Your Wealth. With over 40 years of experience, she helps high-net-worth families reduce taxes, protect legacy, and retire with confidence. Known for her warmth, loyalty, and precision, Karen blends deep strategy with human connection walking clients through life's biggest transitions with clarity, care, and purpose.

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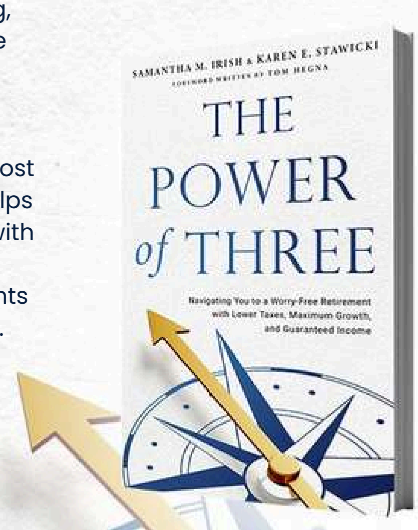

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A few words from our Sponsor

Dear Readers,

There are certain things you only learn with time.

When you're younger, it's easy to believe that success is measured by bigger milestones. A larger home. A growing business. A promotion. A larger investment account. We spend years chasing the next achievement, convinced that if we can simply build a little more, life will somehow become easier.

Then, somewhere along the way, your perspective begins to change.

You realize that the greatest gift money has ever given you wasn't more money.

It was choice.

The choice to spend an afternoon with your grandchildren instead of sitting behind a desk.

The choice to take a trip while your health allows you to enjoy it.

The choice to help someone you love without wondering how you'll make it work.

The choice to continue working because you still find joy and purpose in what you do…
not because you have to.

As I write this, I'm reminded how grateful I am for those choices.

Some of my favorite afternoons are the simplest ones. Meeting friends for a round of golf. Gathering my family around the dinner table. Watching my grandchildren grow into who God created them to be. None of those moments show up on a financial statement, yet they're the very reason we spend our lives building wealth in the first place.

The theme of this issue asks an important question:

How does your mission show up in your business?

I smiled when I first read that because, after more than forty years in this profession, I've come to believe that the answer isn't found in a mission statement hanging on a wall.

It's found in the conversations you're willing to have.

The promises you keep.

The way you care for people when no one else is watching.

At Compass Financial, our mission has never been simply helping people accumulate wealth. It's helping them use the resources they've been blessed with to create a life filled with confidence, freedom, generosity, and purpose.

That mission influences far more than the financial strategies we recommend.

It shapes how we listen before we speak. How we educate before we advise. How we build relationships that often span generations. It's why Samantha and I believe every recommendation should answer a much bigger question than, "Will this improve a portfolio?"

should answer:

"Will this help our clients live the life they've worked so hard to build?"

After all, the happiest clients I've met over the past four decades are rarely the ones with the largest portfolios.

They're the ones whose financial lives have been intentionally designed around what matters most to them. As you read through this issue of Marketing, Media & Money, I hope you'll notice that same thread woven throughout each story. Every entrepreneur, leader, and business owner featured here has built something that reflects who they are and what they believe. Their mission isn't something they talk about once a year. It shows up in the decisions they make every single day.

Perhaps that's true for all of us.

Our mission isn't ultimately measured by what we say.

It's revealed by how we live, how we lead, and how we serve the people who have placed their trust in us. As you enjoy this quarter's issue, I hope you'll ask yourself one simple question:

What does my mission say about the life I'm building?

Because when your finances, your business, and your values begin working together, success becomes about far more than numbers.

It becomes about significance.

Blessings To You,

Karen Stawicki

Co-Founder, Compass Financial

Compass Financial
NAVIGATE YOUR WEALTH

#MarketingTip

Marketing works best when every touchpoint helps the right people understand your value and take the next step.

~ patty farmer

The $27,000 Invoice I Almost Didn't Send

I was sitting at a stoplight, having just dropped my kids at school, when my phone pinged with an email marked "Urgent."

I pulled over to read it, and my heart started pounding. The trip I was supposed to leave for in less than 24 hours, a train-the-trainer program I had spent weeks preparing to co-facilitate in Ethiopia, was canceled.

That’s when I started spiraling. I had cleared my calendar for nearly a month, poured weeks into all the preparations, and now, I was staring at a gaping hole where all of that work, and all of that revenue, had just been. My share of the contract was $27,000, and in an instant, it was gone.

As I was relaying everything to my husband that night, he asked a simple question. “Don’t you have a cancellation clause?” Honestly, the thought hadn't even crossed my mind, but when I finally pulled out the contract and read it, there it was in plain language: two weeks notice or full payment.

And that's when the second spiral began.

Should I ask for it? Could I ask for it?
I twisted myself into knots over that question. It was a USAID-funded contract, and I felt deeply uncomfortable at the idea of "taking" money from a company in a developing country, never mind that the client was a major international airline.
I worried about what people would think of me if I asked to be paid for work I didn't ultimately deliver. I had a dozen reasons why asking felt wrong, and every single one of them sounds ridiculous now that I’m far outside the situation.

Looking back, I can see it more clearly.
I was making assumptions about the other party, casting myself as the noble martyr, and using all of it as a reason not to honor a contract I had painstakingly worked through months before that.

It was my husband, again, who cut through the noise when he finally said, “You know, no man is spiraling like this. He would have already sent the invoice and picked up the phone to schedule the makeup dates.”

He was right, and it stung because I had spent days agonizing, feeling guilty at the idea of asking for it, and telling myself a story about how I didn’t deserve the money.

Fortunately, I found the courage and did eventually ask. I submitted the invoice for the full amount, and I was paid without a single question or pushback. The whole thing was, in the end, completely routine for everyone but me.

I wish I could tell you the lesson landed instantly, but it didn't. The deeper realization came later, when I started telling this story. Over and over, I watched highly accomplished, successful women, many of whom were further along in business than I was, respond the same way.

"I never would have asked."

"I've definitely let clients off the hook for things my contract clearly covered."

"I would have felt guilty, too."

That's when it hit me like a lightning bolt. This wasn't just my problem. It was our problem!

These were brilliant, experienced, deeply skilled women. None of them lacked competence or capability, and yet, at some fundamental level, many of them, myself included, were all running businesses while treating our own work and our worth as something to negotiate or apologize for.

I’m not going to pretend there aren’t real systemic and cultural reasons that contribute to conditioning like this, but seeing this pattern among so many of us changed something in me. I realized I couldn't keep doing general corporate consulting and look away from what I had just seen. I knew, with deep certainty, that I had to shift my work toward women-owned businesses.

That was 2017. The work I do has evolved a great deal since then, but the core conviction born in that moment has never wavered. I believe women have a genuinely unique and powerful way of leading, and the data backs that up at every turn.
I’m actively trying to help build a world where women globally use their unique skills, talent, and expertise—unapologetically—to create opportunities for themselves and others through business.

As a business owner, my mission is the direct result of a $27,000 invoice I almost didn't send and the deeply uncomfortable recognition of what that symbolized.

In the years since then, I've learned that mission isn't the soft, feel-good part of a business we often treat it as. It's one of the most practical tools I have. It's the filter every decision runs through. When you know exactly what you're for and who you're here to serve, the hard calls get easier and the business gets stronger. I don't see that as a luxury you earn once you're successful; it's the thing that makes your success possible and richer.

That same conviction is what I now help other women find and build from. When a woman gets clear on what she truly stands for, her business stops being a collection of things she said yes to and becomes a deliberate expression of what she's here to do. That clarity changes how she prices, who she serves, and what she's willing to walk away from. It's the difference between a business that happens to her and one she builds on purpose.

I believe women with deep conviction, hard-won expertise, and the resources to act are the most underutilized force for good in the world. When they finally claim all of it, without apology, the impact doesn't stay contained to their businesses. It moves outward, into their families, their communities, and the systems they're determined to change.

My entire business exists to make that happen, one woman, one conviction, and yes, one unapologetically sent invoice at a time.

About the Author

Jessica Sato is a strategic thought partner for established women founders and CEOs navigating major crossroads in their businesses. Drawing on two decades of high-stakes strategy work that began at Boeing, she helps them identify the conviction-driven vision they've circled but never named, then build the bridge to reach it. She is also the creator of Built to Last Egypt.

Up Close & Personal with our Cover Girl...

Jess Sato

Q: When did mission first become more than a personal value and start becoming a lens for how you build and lead your business?

A: I've always been values-driven, but it wasn't until 2022 that things started to shift for me. The "scale at all costs" and constant talk of MONEY! started to feel hollow to me. I looked at companies I admire and realized there was a better way to do business. Right then, I made a conscious decision to get clear on my values, be more intentional about my own mission, and rebuild my business to match.

Q: Was there an early experience, mentor, or moment that shaped the way you think about the relationship between business, responsibility, and meaningful impact?

A: Early in my career at Boeing, I worked alongside Anne Roosevelt, who led the company's global corporate citizenship work. I watched her embed Boeing's responsibility to the community into the actual operations of the business rather than making it an afterthought. I learned that having an intentional impact orientation is a critically important way of building trust and growing the business. That lesson has shaped everything I've done since.

Q: How do you define mission inside a for-profit business?

A: Mission lays out the change you want to see in the world through the work you do as a company. For me and my clients, mission is the foundation of our identity, and because of that, it becomes a logic and decision filter that shapes everything we do, including who we serve, what we offer, and how we grow.

Q: What is the difference between having a mission statement and allowing mission to shape the way a business operates?

A: A mission statement is often something static that gets pasted on a company's website. An operational mission is different; it shows up in your calendar appointments, the way you price your products and services, who you choose to work with, and what you ultimately say yes or no too.

If your mission has never once cost you something or changed a decision, I would argue it's not actually an operational piece of your business.

Q: How do you personally embed mission into your business model rather than attach it as an afterthought?

A: As a Certified Benefit Corporation for Good, I run everything I do, including potential clients, partnerships, and new opportunities, through a triple bottom line filter of people, profit, and planet. Does this honor people and their contributions? Does it respect the planet? Is it financially sound?

At the end of the day, if something causes harm or is extractive by nature, the answer is no, even when the money I might make is tempting.

Q: How do you help women navigate the tension between purpose and profit?

A: We start by acknowledging that the tension is real. We've been told we have to choose between the two, but that's a false choice. We get stuck believing we either have to water down our mission to make money or become a martyr in service of the mission. Neither works in the long run. I help women see that their deepest values are a strategic asset to the business, not a liability, and then we build a business model where doing good and doing well reinforce one another.

Q: For those who don't know your work, how do you help the women you serve?

A: The founders and CEOs I work with have usually reached a stage where they're finally able to step back and think deeply about what they want to build. My best work is helping them unearth the bigger vision they haven't acted on yet and figure out where that belief meets what the market can bear. From there, we build a strategic bridge to bring it all to life.

Q: How does mission influence the decisions a business owner makes about who they serve, what they offer, and what opportunities they say yes or no to?

A: Mission makes the hard no's easier. When you're clear on the change you're here to create, you can spot the opportunities that look great on paper but pull you off course and turn them down without second-guessing. Every no in service of your mission protects your capacity to say a wholehearted yes to the work that matters to you. Without that clarity, you end up saying yes to everything and building a business that's busy but not aligned.

Q: **What role does community, collaboration, or partnership play in helping mission-driven business owners create greater impact?**

A: We love to say entrepreneurship is lonely, but it doesn't have to be. Some of the most powerful moments in my and my clients' work have come because of relationships. I've seen what happens when women from different cultures sit across the table from one another and realize just how much they have in common.

Impact rarely happens in isolation which means community is how the mission comes to life and ultimately scales.

Q: **What would you say to a woman who has built a successful business but feels the call to be more mission-driven?**

A: Lean into it. In over two decades of doing this work, that call often shows up when you've achieved what you set out to build and then realize it's no longer enough. Our natural instinct is to burn it all down in order to do something different, but it's better to strategically evolve. Start by getting honest about what you want your business to stand for and then build a bridge between where you are now and where you want to go.

Q: **What does mission-led leadership require from us right now?**

A: Courage and clarity. Your willingness to stand for something specific, even when it's easier to be neutral, is the most powerful differentiation tool you have. Mission-led leadership requires us to decide what we believe, evolve our businesses accordingly, and stand confidently in it.

It's not easy, but I believe businesses built with genuine conviction at their core are the ones that will still be standing in the next decade.

Is your marketing *profitable* or painful?

Are you sick of trying **strategy after strategy** yet still not getting the **results** you want?

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More Sales Won't Fix This

Dr. Nadia Y. Brown

"I'm ready to hit $1.2 million. Let's talk about how to get there."

She joined our Zoom call smiling, excited about what the next year could look like for her business. I was excited too, but then I told her something she wasn't expecting.

"If we pursue that goal without fixing what's underneath this business first, it's going to implode."

She stared at me.

Most founders believe more sales will solve the problems they're carrying. What my client hadn't considered was that she didn't simply have a revenue goal. She had an infrastructure problem that more sales wouldn't fix.

A mentor once told me, "cash flow covers a multitude of sins," which it does. Until it doesn't. Many founders have been advised to focus solely on keeping the money coming in. While cash flow is important, it should not become an excuse to sidestep structural, cultural, or team problems that need attention, which can quickly become a liability. The business grows, and the problems grow with it. Eventually, the cash flow that was covering everything stops being enough.

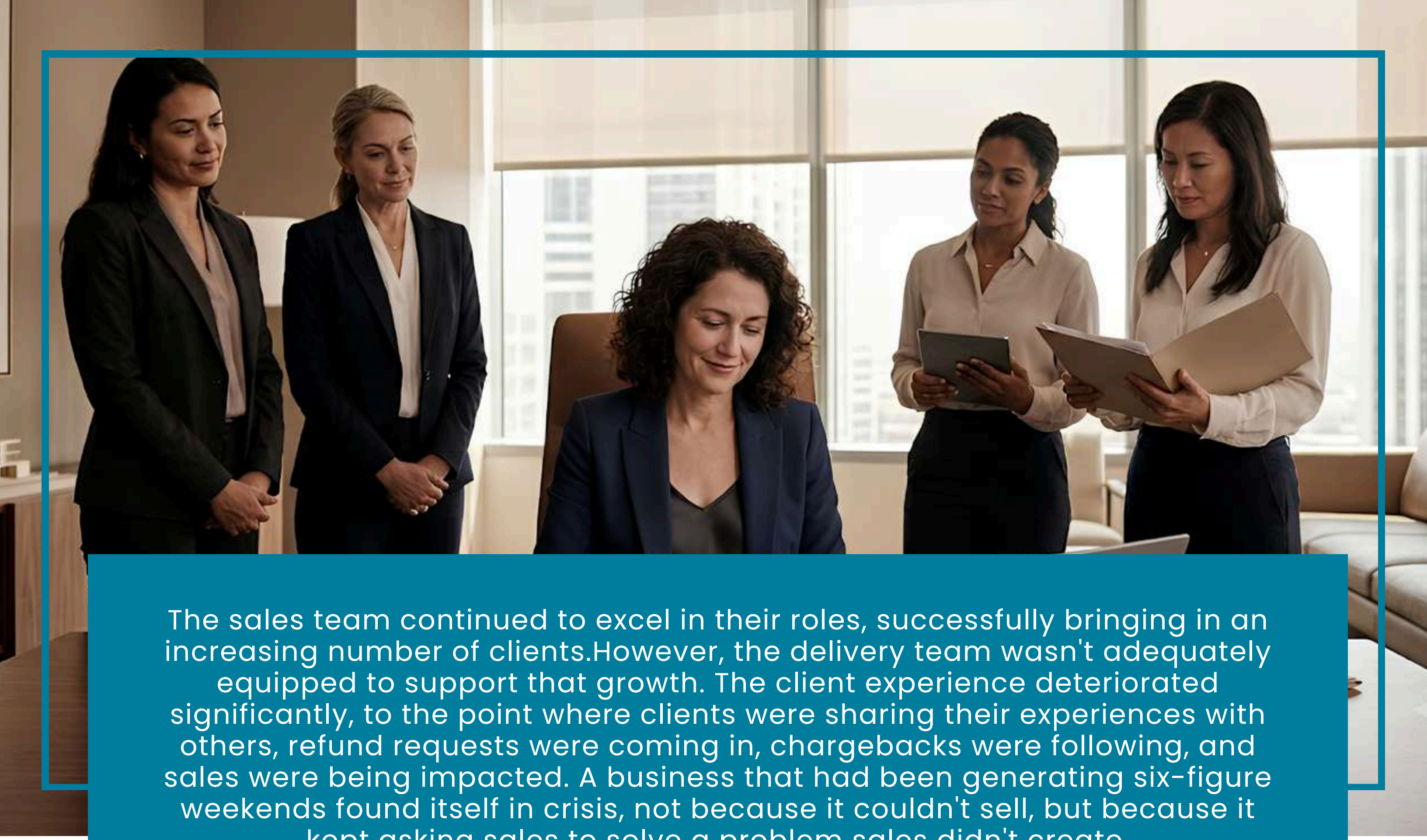
Cash flow can buy time. It can hide operational inefficiencies, make founder dependence feel manageable, and even mask culture problems for a while. What it can't do is make those Problems disappear.

I'd watched that story play out before.

Years earlier, I worked with a business that was well past the seven-figure mark, with a full sales team in place where one salesperson alone generated six-figure weekends.
The cash was absolutely flowing.
From the outside, everything looked healthy.

Inside the business, it was a different story.
For more than a year, I raised concerns about the client delivery team because their performance was off, and I was concerned it would eventually impact the business.
There were team members who needed performance conversations, accountability, real intervention, or to simply be let go.
The response was always the same:
we'll get to it.

They never got to it.



The sales team continued to excel in their roles, successfully bringing in an increasing number of clients.However, the delivery team wasn't adequately equipped to support that growth. The client experience deteriorated significantly, to the point where clients were sharing their experiences with others, refund requests were coming in, chargebacks were following, and sales were being impacted. A business that had been generating six-figure weekends found itself in crisis, not because it couldn't sell, but because it kept asking sales to solve a problem sales didn't create.

Back to my original client. She absolutely could build a $1.2 million business. I just didn't want her to arrive there carrying problems that would become exponentially harder to solve. Before we focused on selling more, we needed to build a business that could sustain the growth she was pursuing.

This reflex, the belief that more sales is always the answer, shows up inside almost every organization I have worked with. The cash is coming in, the problems feel manageable, and addressing them keeps getting pushed to another day until it can't.

More Sales Magnifies Operational Chaos

Most operational problems are easy to overlook when volume is low. The onboarding process that felt manageable; the delivery gaps that seemed minor; the client experience that was inconsistent but survivable. More sales doesn't smooth any of that out. It exposes it. What gets exposed doesn't stay hidden; it shows up in the client relationship, in the team's ability to deliver, and eventually in the business' reputation.

I've watched founders pour new clients into broken delivery systems and wonder why their client reviews started slipping, or refund requests were climbing despite revenue being up. While more sales didn't create those problems, it definitely made them impossible to overlook any longer.

If your business doubled its client base tomorrow, would your operations support that growth, or would they expose everything you haven't fixed yet?

More Sales Exposes Founder Dependence

There is a version of growth that looks impressive from the outside and exhausting from the inside. The founder is everywhere. She is approving decisions that her team should be making. She is the final word on things that shouldn't require her at all.
She has hired people to support her but hasn't fully released the work to them.
Everything still flows through her personally.

More sales doesn't fix that dynamic. It intensifies it. Every new client, every new project, every new decision adds to a workload that was already concentrated in one place.
At some point, the founder becomes the bottleneck in her own business, and no amount of revenue changes that until she decides to build something that doesn't require her to be everywhere.

Think about the last time you were unavailable for a week. What happened to the business while you were gone?

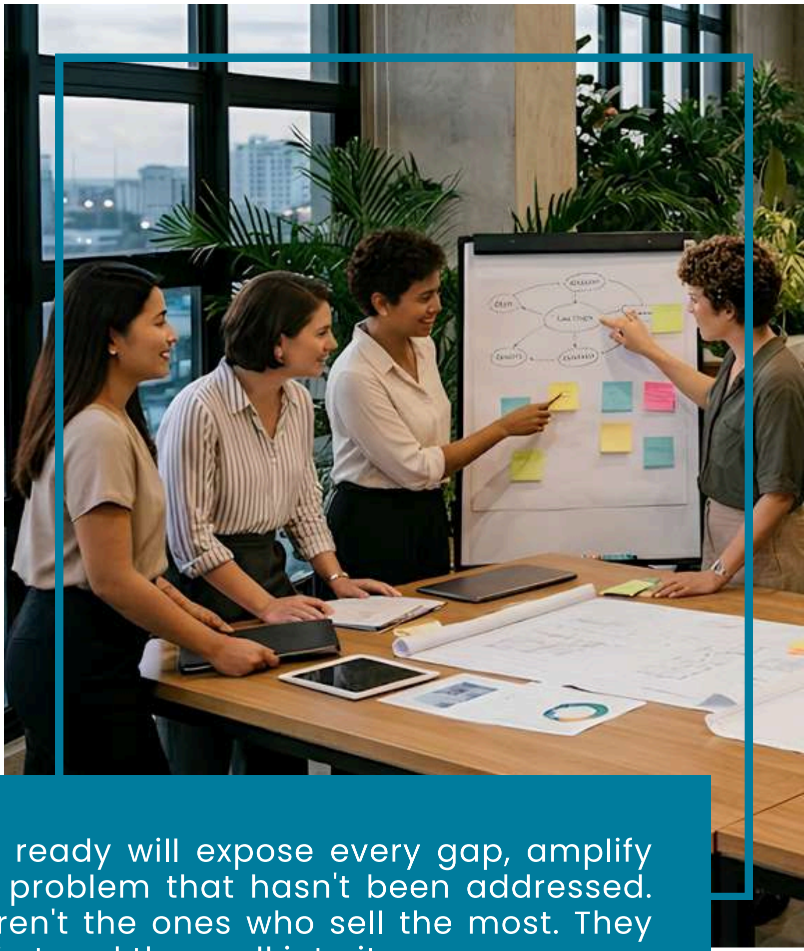
> *Cash flow covers a multitude of sins... until it doesn't.*
>
> *~Dr. Nadia Y. Brown*

More Sales Accelerates Culture Problems

When business picks up, the team that lacked direction doesn't suddenly find it. The performers who were coasting get exposed. The tension between team members that had been simmering surfaces in the work, in the client experience, and eventually in the results.

When culture problems exist, more sales turns up the volume on all of them. The founders who discover this the hard way are usually the ones who believed that growth would somehow solve the people problems they had been postponing. It never does. It only amplifies them.

If your team had twice the workload tomorrow, would they rise to meet it or would the cracks in your culture become impossible to ignore?



Sales poured into a business that isn't ready will expose every gap, amplify every weakness, and accelerate every problem that hasn't been addressed. The founders who scale successfully aren't the ones who sell the most. They are the ones who build the foundation first and then sell into it.

Before you set your next revenue goal, ask yourself a different question. Not how do I get more sales, **but what does my business need to be ready for more sales?** The answer to that question marks the beginning of sustainable growth. Achieving sustainability necessitates dependable operations that can deliver consistently, a team well-versed in expectations who can execute independently, and a resilient culture strong enough to carry the weight of what growth actually brings.

The time invested in building a solid foundation isn't time lost. It's the only reason the growth sticks.

About the Author

Dr. Nadia Y. Brown believes sales isn't broken because of salespeople. It's broken because of the culture and infrastructure leadership built around them. As founder of The Doyenne Agency, she works with founders and sales leaders to build the foundation that makes growth sustainable. She is the author of Sell Like a Lady and writes at Dear Doyenne on Substack.

#MediaTip

The right media opportunity does not just create visibility; it reinforces what you want to be known for.

~ *patty farmer*

Why & How a ROCKIN' Landing Page Can Help You Sell More

Today I want to talk with you about something near and dear to me… landing pages. I know you are thinking, why would a landing page be near and dear to me?
The simple fact is that I have worked with countless businesses of all types for more than a decade, businesses of all shapes and sizes. And there's one thing I feel strongly that most businesses should have on their website (besides services pages and blog posts, of course) and that is landing pages.

What Value Does a Landing Page Provide That a Service Page Does Not

All too often, businesses (especially coaches or consultants) will have a goal such as getting more signups for a paid offer, driving downloads of their free guide, running a paid search campaign to drive leads or even registrations for an event, yet they don't have a landing page that is focused 100% on the goal.

Directing site visitors to your website home page or a service page from social media, an email campaign or another marketing channel, and hoping they take action is like throwing darts at a dartboard blindfolded. Can you get results this way? Yes. Is this the best way to ensure your marketing efforts and dollars pay off? No.

It's important to note that landing pages are not traditionally an organic SEO approach. Most of the time, organic traffic comes to your website from a search that the user conducts, and so they are more likely to take action from the home page, a service page, your blog or a resource page. Landing pages are perfect for traffic that comes from other methods.

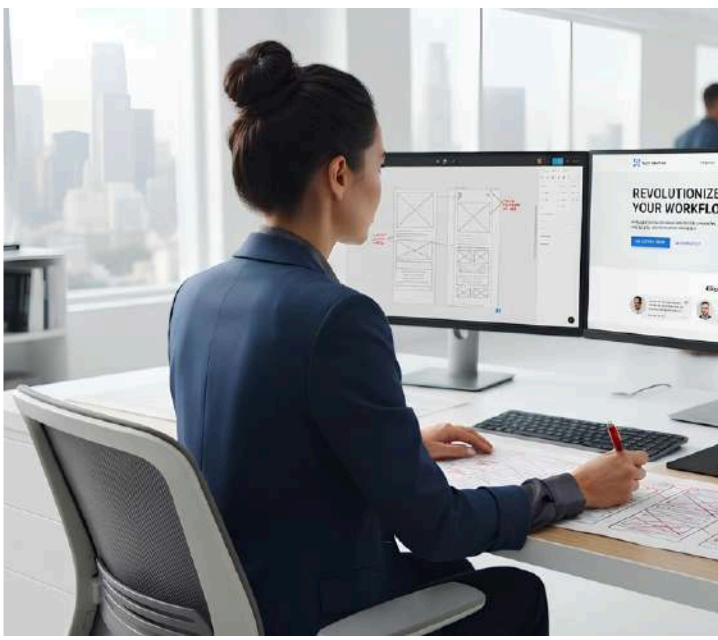
If your website isn't using landing pages, you may be missing one of the most powerful ways to convert visitors into customers. Professionally written and designed landing pages remove distractions and drive visitors towards one single action. Without navigation, sidebars and footer elements, your content is set up to maximize your marketing objectives. Let's look at when landing pages work best and why you need them.

Why Landing Pages Matter for Businesses

Most pages on your website are built for browsing and learning about your business, but landing pages are different. These tightly focused pages are built to convert visitors, lower acquisition costs, and generate measurable growth.

01 Landing Pages Eliminate Distractions

By removing the competing elements of a web page, like navigation menus and blog post links, you can keep attention on one thing. If you are trying to promote an offer or convert a lead into a buyer, the last thing you want is a compelling blog post that pulls the visitor's attention in a different direction.



02 Landing Pages Increase Conversion Rates

Landing pages strip back a business' goals to a single point of focus. The goal of the page is obvious, whether it's a discounted offer or opt-in download, and visitors are left with the choice to complete an action or leave the page. With a single primary focus on the page, it's easier to measure results with Google Analytics, while testing and optimizing elements for an improved ROI.

03 Landing Pages Improve Campaign Performance

An effective landing page will offer perfect alignment between the traffic source, such as a direct email or paid ad, and the messaging on the page itself. When someone clicks through, <u>meaningful website content delivers real value</u> that meets their expectations and moves them to take action.

When Your Website Needs a Landing Page

If you're intentionally sending traffic to your website, a landing page will almost always outperform a standard page. While building dedicated pages isn't necessary for every situation, there are specific circumstances where they deliver impressive results.

Running Paid Advertising

Google Ads, social media campaigns, retargeting and other paid advertising work best when directed to a dedicated landing page. With an optimized landing page you can improve your Google Quality Score for a possibly lower cost per acquisition, and A/B test key elements for higher conversion rates.

Promoting a Specific Service or Offer

Discounted or limited offers, seasonal promotions and new product launches are some of the types of promotions that suit a landing page.
With a limited focus, visitors are less likely to feel overwhelmed, and there are more opportunities to give the campaign a real sense of purpose.

Traffic Coming from External or Offline Campaigns

Businesses have many opportunities to reach consumers through email newsletters, guest posts, social promotions and direct mail campaigns. To make the most of the marketing channels, directing traffic to specific URLs lets you optimize pages for each audience and track your campaign costs.

Generating Leads at Events or In-Person

Meeting people at events and conferences connects you with some of the most receptive audiences you will find. By working with a content writer, you can create and optimize dedicated landing pages for added personalization.
This approach lets you measure engagement and typically works far better than sending people to a homepage.

5 Questions to Answer Before Hitting Publish

It's easy to write a landing page that you feel is perfectly clear for your goal. However, you are not necessarily your customer, and you already know the services you offer, so it's easy to overlook an important aspect of your value proposition. Before hitting "publish" on your landing page, make sure it answers these questions.

01 Is there a clear call to action on the page?

02 Can the page visitor clearly understand what the offer is (or what you want to promote) at the top of the page?

03 Do you have at least two ways for the page visitor to convert? For example, the user can fill out a form or call you.

04 Does the page incorporate reviews or client testimonials?

05 What other items, such as a video, could you add to the page to help the visitor learn more about you or your business without being a distraction?

Ready to Get More Business?

Now that you know all about landing pages, why they matter, and when you should be using a landing page instead of a service page, it's time to take action. Drive traffic and increase conversions with high-quality landing pages for your offers, product launches, lead generation, paid ads and email campaigns. And if you need help, Rocks Digital helps businesses attract attention and drive growth with our landing page design and content writing services.

About the Author

Lissa Duty is a branding and digital marketing strategist. When you speak with Lissa, you'll know immediately that she is passionate about all things digital.

Lissa serves as the Managing Partner at Rocks Digital Marketing, LLC. She works with the Rocks Digital team, overseeing day-to-day operations and ensuring client websites look great, perform well and attract search engines and consumers.

#MoneyTip

The clearer the path from visibility to value, the easier it becomes for the right people to say yes.

~ patty farmer

Creating Strategic Impact Through Business and Community Collaboration

Gail Stevens

Why Strategic Collaboration Matters

Businesses are often encouraged to "give back," but meaningful community involvement requires more than a donation, sponsorship, or single day of volunteering. The greatest value is created when leaders approach community collaboration with the same intentionality they bring to strategy, culture, and growth.

When companies build sustained partnerships with community organizations, they can strengthen employee engagement, retention, leadership development, corporate culture, and community trust. They can also help address issues such as food insecurity, homelessness, education, financial literacy, health and wellness, workforce development, veterans' needs, and senior services. The goal is not to support every cause, but to identify where an organization's values, resources, people, and expertise can make a meaningful contribution.

The most productive starting point is to ask:
What does the community truly need? Where are we equipped to help? What would success look like for everyone involved? Those questions move community involvement from a well-intentioned activity to a mutually beneficial partnership.

From Good Intentions to Measurable Impact

A one-time project may generate enthusiasm, but lasting impact requires continuity, clear goals, and accountability. Leaders should establish expectations with their community partners, determine how employees will participate, and evaluate whether the relationship is producing value over time.

Measurement does not diminish generosity; it protects it. Indicators might include employee participation, retention, leadership growth, partner satisfaction, continuity, and community outcomes. Not every result can be reduced to a number, but thoughtful key performance indicators help organizations improve and invest where they can create the greatest long-term value.

Businesses may contribute structure, resources, networks, and the ability to mobilize people. Community organizations contribute trusted relationships, lived experience, and firsthand knowledge of those they serve. When both sides listen and plan together, they can accomplish more than either could alone.

A Legacy of Service

My commitment to this work is deeply personal. My late mother, Ellen Wolin, was my inspiration, role model, and North Star. She lived to be 93 and spent more than 40 years as an entrepreneur with my father in Flint, Michigan. She was a businesswoman and community leader who left a proud legacy for her family and community.

From her, I learned that service is not simply something we schedule. It is noticing people, responding to what they need, and showing care through consistent action. That lesson continues to influence how I think about leadership and community responsibility.

The Gift of Gratitude

One of the most visible ways I express that belief is through what I call a Gift of Gratitude. It may be a carefully chosen gift, food delivered to someone recovering from surgery, recognition offered to a community leader, or a gesture that says, “I see you, I appreciate you, and your contribution matters.”

The value is not in the size or price of the gift, but in the intention behind it. Gratitude creates connection, and connection strengthens trust. In organizations, that principle can shape how leaders recognize employees, appreciate partners, and honor those who make progress possible. When gratitude becomes part of the culture, people feel valued and more willing to contribute.

Strategic impact does not always begin with a large initiative. It often begins with paying attention. A leader who recognizes others can influence culture, and a company that listens before acting can build stronger partnerships. Small, sincere actions can become the foundation for sustainable change.

Advancing Shared Values

My work is grounded in humanity, dignity, respect, compassion, leadership, connection, purpose, volunteerism, and social responsibility. At its heart, it is about helping people and organizations work together more effectively.

Shared values do not require everyone to think alike or agree on every issue. They provide a starting point for listening, solving problems, and considering the whole. That foundation can strengthen trust among leaders, employees, customers, and community partners while helping people focus on what can be accomplished together.

> *Each of us has a voice, but we do not automatically know how to use it effectively.*
>
> *~ Gail Stevens*

Creating an Orchestra of Voices

We must learn how to engage our voices with a larger community in ways that create meaningful impact.

I describe this as creating not merely a chorus, but an orchestra of voices. An orchestra respects every instrument for its distinct sound and contribution. Likewise, collaboration should not erase individuality; it should bring different perspectives together so the whole becomes stronger.

An orchestra also requires listening, timing, and awareness. Those qualities matter in leadership. People create greater impact when they understand when to lead, when to support, and when to make space for another voice.

Turning Purpose into Lasting Impact

I explore these principles more deeply in my contribution to the bestselling collaborative book **LeadHERship: Inspiring Women Leading with Purpose.** My chapter invites leaders to consider how their organizations can serve, collaborate, and create value over the long term.

Business and community collaboration can strengthen organizations and the communities they serve. The work begins by listening, choosing an area of meaningful alignment, establishing a plan, measuring what matters, and recognizing the people who make the impact possible.

Strategic impact is not reserved for major corporations, public figures, or large foundations. It is created through intentional choices, sustained relationships, and a willingness to use our resources and voices in service to something larger than ourselves.

About the Author

Gail Stevens, as CEO and Founder of a consulting firm in Dallas, STRATEGIC IMPACT GROUP, specializing in Business & Community Collaboration, draws from her entire life experience, family, upbringing, community, education and career over many years to create her Chapter 3.Her personal and professional lives have always woven in important values and ideals, defining her life, company, mission and purpose.

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