

The hustle cycle

 Tue, 3/2 4:29PM  11:54

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

hustle, features, push, work, high pressure, burnout, creating, mike, week, testing, team, splashy, client, check, feel, reminder, yesterday, intention, online business manager, craziness

SPEAKERS

Erin Kelly

Hey, hey, Erin Kelly here. So I think this is a great topic to round out the week. And that is avoiding hustle mode. And, you know, this is something that we actively try and do in our own business, both because we don't enjoy how that feels. That's why we avoid doing launches, why we don't do big promotional pushes for the most part. And we kind of do a slow and steady agile approach to the development of MemberVault, in the sense that we're just always working on it. And we're always taking feedback. And you know, we have long range plans, and we're just, you know, chugging away, instead of trying to do you know, 15 hour development pushes, so that we can get big, big features out really, really fast. Or that we can do, like a big promotional push where we have, you dramatically changed the platform or something like that.

And that's just not how we're running our business. It's a choice that we've made, pretty much from the very beginning, in terms of wanting to go for the long game, you know, just like we do with our sales approach. And, and that includes making sure that everyone that's on the team is not setting themselves up for burnout. And I credit part of this, too, back when I was in OBM, which is an online business manager, and my primary client was Adrienne Dorison. And I still remember one of her big things was, we're not creating oxygen here. And I actually, this could have been a quote that she picked up elsewhere, I'm not sure. But I always accredit it to her, because that was very much a core philosophy for her, and then also, you know, for her team, and it was really helpful because when there was, you know, high stress things happening, or if there was a big oops, or, you know, anything like that, that typically in another team might have been, you know, something that would be incredibly stressful. She always took that approach of, you

know, we're not creating oxygen.

And so we've really brought that into how we are running MemberVault. But even so, even though that's our intention, and even though we actively pay a lot of attention to that, and that is like a core philosophy for us is that we don't want to, we don't want to burn ourselves out. We don't want to be hustling to the point where we feel stressed out every day. You know, and like that we have to work 12 plus hour days, you know, we try and make all of our decisions based around not setting ourselves self up for that lifestyle. And yet, you know, I think because we are still surrounded by a hustle culture, and it is very much what's the best word to say it.

I mean, I think that we glamorize hustle culture and it's like, oh, look at what, you know, these people did like what the they had this huge splashy launch or like, Oh, look at this new SAS company. And they've they hit like 5 million ARR, which is annual recurring revenue in their first year, you know, like, all of these like very splashy numbers and results. But the behind the scenes of that is those people hustled. And, and certainly in the in the short term, but probably in the long term to to get to that point. And so I think that it's very easy, especially if you're a high achiever, if you are very passionate about what you're doing, it's very easy to slip back into hustle mode, even if your intention is not to live a life that is just constantly high pressure, high stress, hustle, hustle, hustle. You know, always being on your phone. And obviously, if you work for someone else like this is this probably sounds like incredibly privileged that, that we are able to, to control that that we don't expect that of our of our team members that we don't expect that of ourselves that we're not always, you know, 24/7 online or plugged in.

But, you know, that is that's one of our intentions. And we're lucky enough that we've created a company that we can, we can make that happen. But like I said, it's very easy to fall back into that mode. And so one of the things that we had created this year with what we were doing our plan back at the end of last year, was Hey, like, what makes sense for us, because we know we're going to be taking maternity and paternity leave later in 2021. And because we have some features that we really want to push that have been kind of on the docket for a while now. Let's do a January like kind of fast, you know, fast action, feature push where we basically have new, pretty big features coming out every single week.

But what happened is, and we did that, and it was awesome, people really liked it. And it obviously brings a lot of energy and buzz and all that good stuff, a lot of engagement. But it's a lot of work on the back end. It's a lot of work for the entire team, because it's not just development, but it's also testing and documentation. There's more customer service because

there's more questions about new features, and so it creates a much higher pressure environment than what we really want to encourage for our team, and so it was like, Okay, this is just gonna be one month, like, let's do it, it'll kick the, the the year off, right. And we'll clear some of these things off of the slate in terms of features that we've been, you know, planning on doing for a while.

But the thing is, is, is best laid plans, you know, a few other things came up while we were doing that. And so it actually, it pushed it out, we still have, I think two features left from our January push that we haven't completed yet. And, and it's because other things came up that we had to do as well. And so, you know, it kind of pushed it pushed or things were, I know that in particular, there was one feature that touched a lot of old code. And so Mike took the time to, to dive into it a little bit deeper, and improve other things while he was working on that particular feature, which meant that it took longer than expected for that particular one to be pushed, I think that one actually took two weeks. So now we are, you know, in the middle of February, and we're still in that like high pressure, pushing something pretty big every week, for the most part.

And, you know, Mike and I were checking in with each other yesterday. And he was just like, I am exhausted. And I'm not enjoying this anymore. And I was like, This is craziness. Like I know, we have been, you know, trying to get to the end of what we you know, the the January list items. And this is where I think I wanted to bring it up, because I think that this is we can kind of create our own self imposed pressures, in the sense that, you know, we had come up with this list, and we're like, okay, like, once we get through this list, then we can get back to our normal kind of flow. And so we've been really pushing ourselves, even though things have changed somewhat from the original plan. And so it was like, okay, yesterday was kind of a wake up call of like, this is not worth it. People are not going to mind if we push these every two weeks instead of every one week. And that will be a lot easier for our team, it'll be easier for Mike.

It'll give everyone a lot more space, we're not going to be because the way it was kind of working as like the feature was was basically getting wrapped on Thursdays, but then it still needed to be tested. And you know, documentation needed to be written up. And we wanted to give our Certified Partners a chance to test it. And so it was actually creating a situation where even though we encourage and recommend that our our people are on our team don't work weekends unless they want to, because we let people craft their own schedules.

But it's like, if you don't want to work on the weekend, don't work on the weekend, like we don't expect you to be online, it was still kind of like, actions speak louder than words. Like we're saying we don't expect you to work on the weekend. But we're not having this ready to go into the

testing and documentation mode until late Thursday. And, you know, we're in the Pacific Time Zone, Mike and I and you know, in the HQ, but we also we have our new developer, he's in Ghana. And then we have Katrina, who's in Canada. And she's so she's like, basically East Coast time. And so it's just, you know, they're, they're ahead of us, basically, is what I'm trying to say it's like, we're basically giving them one day unless they're going to work over the weekend. And, and a very high pressure to hit that.

So, you know, we really checked in when that we made a change, to where we were really trying to get stuff done by Tuesday. But that obviously put a lot more pressure on Mike and he lasted one week and was like, this is not fun for me. And so yeah, yesterday after yesterday, this morning, I was talking to Mike and our morning meeting and I said, let's just move to a two week push like this is craziness. Like let's, we don't need to burn everyone out, including ourselves, getting these last few features out. Because there's other things after that, too. So. So this is kind of just a reminder, this is a sharing behind the scenes, and then be, you know, a reminder that if you have something that you kind of have set up your own milestones around that you've set your own kind of expectations around and even if you've announced it publicly, that it is okay, if you were feeling yourself on the edge of burnout, or if you're just finding that you're not enjoying it anymore, which is kind of a symptom of burnout.

Usually, it's okay to revisit that and say, okay, like, what would make this feel fun again, and do I need more space, and that your people will understand and likely won't even notice and potentially will even be happy that you're giving them more space as well. And I know that our people will appreciate this because that means that the testing, there will be more robust testing, there will be better documentation. And also, just I know, I know from using other tools, and I know from feedback from our users that constant feature pushes is actually really stressful to them, because it's a constant feeling of like, I don't even have time to use what I know how to use right now. But now you're adding more features that I feel like I need to learn to really like optimise the experience.

And so it's like every week you're adding to that like stress load. And so it's just a reminder that we are all in our businesses, hopefully for the long haul. And that you are you how you are choosing to live today is how you will continue to live, right? Like instead of that whole, like, let me, let me Hustle, Hustle, Hustle, and then I'll retire. That's not how we run our business. And that's what we want to enjoy today. And so if you're not enjoying today, because of things that you've set up for yourself, this is just a reminder, a nice little end of the week reminder to sort of check in and be like, what can I change? Obviously, not everything is within your ability to change, especially if you're working with someone else. But maybe even bringing it up.

If you are working with a client or whatever, just bringing up that this potentially is not the best thing for the people that you're serving, it's not the best thing for you and, and provide a solution. And you might be surprised by their response, they might be relieved. And also, and I know there's got to be people service providers here that are laughing because they've got they're working with clients that are like hustle, hustle, hustle hustle at all costs, in which case, I would say maybe rethink who you're working with. But, um, but yeah, I mean, I think opening open conversation, whether it's with your client or with your people in your audience, and with yourself is really important so that you don't burn yourself out, and that you actually enjoy what you're doing.

And so that was our sort of knee jerk gut check like, oh, yesterday of like, we have we have gone off the rails here from what we want to do. And is this really, are we being intentional, or is it just kind of like we're following, following the the schedule that we set for ourselves and how can we change it? So yeah, I hope you have a wonderful end to your week and I look forward to checking in with you on Monday.