Local **Business** Hacks

by Referrizer

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Creating business value with networking & partnership marketing

Podcast transcript

Dave Nicolanti:
So Daryl, welcome to the to the, to today's call.

Darryl Hicks:
Thanks a lot, Dave. Thanks for having me.

Dave Nicolanti:
So Daryl has a, we're going to dig into your business here in just a minute, but for everybody out there listening, there's some really cool things that are out there that you probably aren't taking advantage of. But we're going to talk about Daryl and how you can find some what I, what I like to call a kind of bonus or magic money. And it's like hidden money out there that you're not taking advantage of. So everybody needs to learn some of these tips, some of these tricks that Daryl has perfected over the years. So Daryl, welcome to the call. I'm telling you to do me a favor. Let's say you and I are riding in an elevator, going to the fifth floor. Give me the elevator pitch real quick on Flexpay.

Darryl Hicks:
Yeah. We help e-commerce companies and really anybody that accepts credit cards over the phone or over the internet to reduce credit card declines. We are an AI driven deep line salvage tool.

Dave Nicolanti:
So to reduce credit card declines. So essentially we do a lot of our listeners in the wellness world. So if they have a monthly subscription plan, their car gets run every, every month through their, through their point of sale through their CRM processing system or whatever. And let's say it expired. And so that's something where you help out with that and kind of recovering that money and keeping that the payments come in and seamless. Correct?

Darryl Hicks:
Yeah. I mean, look, if you want to divide churn. I was a merchant for a long time selling monthly recurring subscription programs and eventually got so good at it that I kind of developed a reputation in the direct marketing world as being the optimization and efficiency guy. And so I launched a third-party administration business about 10 years ago and started running back office for some really big brands. We were completely transparent to the consumer, but we would answer the phone as the brand and we would take care of all the billing and the way our pricing model worked in the third party administration business TBA for short, was, we will only charge you if you make more money with less risk. So we had this huge incentive to really get in and build tools to optimize the business.
And, the way that I look and to give you an idea of scale, like we've sold to directly or serviced, tens of millions of customers over 15 years in four different continents. We were big in Brazil, United States, Canada, UK, and Australia, about 70% of everything we did was in the US and we had a lot of data. And again, this huge incentive built into our business to really optimize that. And I look at churn. Do you want to have the highest possible lifetime value on your customer base? I divide churn into two buckets. It's either voluntary churn where people email you or call you up and say, I don't want this product or service anymore, or involuntary churn. And for a lot of the really good quality merchants out there, it's about a 60, 40 split with 60% being the involuntary stuff.

Do you want to have the highest possible lifetime value on your customer base? I divide churn into two buckets. It's either voluntary churn where people email you or call you up and say, I don't want this product or service anymore, or involuntary churn.

Darryl Hicks:
And it still boggles my mind. I was on the phone with, you know, our really savvy serial entrepreneurs had multiple businesses and you've just recently acquired this direct to consumer business. And they have like thousands of people that they charge monthly. And he was complaining to me about it, it seems like we're losing just as many people as we're bringing in and my member base is flat. And so I asked them that question like, well, you know, what are you doing about your involuntary journeys? Oh, that's not a problem for me. If it was a problem, my CFO would let me know.
My director of finance would let me know, but you know, no, our problem is all, you know, it's all turned on people just reaching out to us and not wanting the product or service anymore. And I'm like, wow, I'd love to know what you're doing because you're obviously much smarter and better than me if that's really the case. So why don't you go take a look with your finance team and come back to me the next day. And he's like - I wouldn't believe this 15.6% of both of our subscriptions are declining. And no one told me cause they just, Well, that's normal. We must be tapping with the subprime demographic or something. And just if the Visa tells you it's declined, it's declined right now.

Dave Nicolanti:
Right. And even that example I gave earlier, it was actually probably a poor example from our prior conversations with the expired credit card. Cause churn involuntary churn is a whole lot more than that. Okay.

Darryl Hicks:
Yeah. Expired cards are only about 4% of all the declines on average. so if you've got a pool of declines, 4% of that pool and that 4% of your whole business, about 4% of the ones that decline are going to be for expired cards and there are good strategies out there for that account. Updater if your listeners are so, so one of the interesting things about this is that all kinds of businesses that used to be brick and mortar face to face never had this problem. Because if you look at the average decline rate in face-to-face business, it's 1.4% declines. That means 98.6% is the average across all transactions in America, on Visa and MasterCard rails.
But now with COVID, everything's moving online, right? E-commerce all these people that used to have people coming into their branch, coming into their business.
Now they're accepting payments online or over the phone.

Darryl Hicks:
And all of a sudden, especially the ones doing the monthly recurring are like, what in the world is all these declines. And a lot of people are thinking it must be because of COVID. It must be because people are stretched thin and they just don't have enough money. But no, actually the average decline rate on face to face is 1.4. The average decline rate on e-commerce is 15.0. That's the average decline rate on all e-commerce transactions on ViSaaS rails in America today. and so the problem's really been exacerbated by, by COVID with all these people now moving online and like, I never had this problem in my business before what the heck is going on. So if you are accepting payments online or over the phone, if you are especially running monthly recurring transactions, they're like an account of data.
We were going to talk about free tools and hacks that you can have to optimize your business, but basil just sends you talking about expired cards, job.

Darryl Hicks:
That one right now, like an account updater, is huge. It's a free service that Visa and MasterCard run. You can access it through your merchant bank usually. and it's free to upload your entire database of all of your users, all the cards that you have on file. And if there are any updates, these are the charges you pay about 8 cents for the update and they manage it on behalf of MasterCard as well. So you get both Visa and MasterCard updates and I mean, look, to get, to get updated card information and updated expiry date, or if a card is replaced for fraud or, or lost or stolen, like for example, I'm with Allstate insurance.
And I recently had to have my card replaced for fraud and I was like, Oh man, I'm gonna have to call all these different companies and give them new card information.

Darryl Hicks:
And sure enough, I forgot to call Allstate insurance. And I'm like, Oh no. I said to my wife, like sweetie, like two months ago, I forgot, I completely forgot to call Allstate. And then I went and looked at my statement and I'm like, Oh my goodness, the charging, the new card number. And I was like, Oh, good for them. They're using account updater right. So my old card number was canceled for fraud, but Allstate, obviously a very smart merchant, is using an account updater and they automatically got the new card number and they're automatically billing my insurance policy. I'm happy, they're happy everybody wins. So this is really low-hanging fruit that everyone, but unfortunately, a lot of merchants just aren't aware of. a lot of companies aren't aware of it, but that's a, that's a really great tool that will help with some of that info.

Dave Nicolanti:
That's what I want to pause for a second. So everybody listening, if you are running any type of online payments or non person to person transactions, if you're not doing that at the very minimum you're losing money. So that's a huge golden nugget for you guys just right now that you can take and use to reclaim and regain not only the customers coming back in and their activity, but also the money that comes along with them. So at the very minimum if you get anything out of this, out of this interview here with Daryl, do that, you're going to get a lot more here as we keep talking. So Darryl, tell me a little bit about flex by who do you guys work with? Who's your audience?

> *if you are running any type of online payments or non person to person transactions, if you're not doing that at the very minimum you're losing money. So that's a huge golden nugget for you guys*

Darryl Hicks:
So we work with, well, first of all, anybody who is in the e-commerce and, and recurring billing subscription world has this problem of false declines and false declines is the terminology that the banks, the issuing banks actually use. It's not, these are MasterCard who decides if a transaction is going to be approved or declined, it's not your merchant bank. It's actually the issuer. That's the name of the bank on the piece of plastic on the card of your customer, your customer's card, right? And they're trying to keep fraud out of the ecosystem to get it wrong. A lot of times they generate, you know, MasterCard came out with the reports as before $140 billion a year in the US alone of false declines. That's before COVID, it's much worse.
Now we're just waiting for the updated numbers from the end of 2020. so pretty much anybody who's online, but definitely there are some sweet spots in there.

Darryl Hicks:
I would say, just people that are selling products that are discretionary, right. where the onus is kind on the customer where yeah, they love your product and they're engaged, but is it really going to seriously damage their life? If all of a sudden their subscription with you lapses, if not, then really you have to be hyper-focused on mending your relationship with them. Again, I would argue that anybody that's in the online space or selling subscriptions should be paying close attention to this and doing something about it. But definitely if you're selling discretionary goods, I think the health and wellness space is huge for this. We serve as a lot of people actually in the health and wellness space. Also SaaS businesses. We have some very large size businesses that process, you know, North of $700 million a year who are using our service to kind of fix subscription payments.

Darryl Hicks:
We work with charitable organizations because lately more and more of the revenue comes into charities as monthly donations, where someone signs up and agrees to donate monthly and the card works for the first four or five months. And then all sudden it starts declining and the charities like why what's going on. And I love helping the charities. That's a really good feel, good application of our technology. We also work with a lot of direct marketers and DRTV merchants that's direct response, television advertisers. So I mean, it kind of runs the whole gambit. We even have some utilities, cell phones, we just signed up for a cell phone carrier, actually a small cell phone carrier that came to us to say, why do I have all these declines every month? And you, and again, I wouldn't have thought that's a sweet spot because you need your cell phone.

Darryl Hicks:
Like in 2021, everybody has to keep their cell phone service alive. And if your payment is declined and your cell phone, and they're threatening to cut off your service, you've got a huge motivation as the consumer to go fix that. So you'd think the cell phone carriers don't care as much because they know their customers are going to come to them to fix it. And yet still this mobile carrier came to us and said, yeah, for sure we have customers reach out to us, but then there's all this friction. And we have the customer service expense that if you've got an automated solution that can fix this behind the scenes, we'd love to hear about it.

Dave Nicolanti:
Automation makes the world go round for days. So that's awesome. So a wide variety of customers. And as we even like in mainstream USA, and as we see a lot of our businesses and we're getting our business, our business owners are forced to be a little bit more creative now in 2020, moving into 2021 where they're doing more things online, they're selling product they're zoned subscription plans, being creative because they're forced to, but I really love what that does. I mean, out of the craziest hardest times that really leads to more creativity. And that's when businesses are really made. That's when the true entrepreneurs have a chance to shine. So I love that flex pain and kind of how you do things. You can just make it easier and give a bigger benefit to them and keep things moving for them. Something that absolutely needs to look into this if you're doing anything with an online payment. So tell me a little bit about flexibility. How long have you guys been around? So

Darryl Hicks:
I started dabbling with all this involuntary churn stuff and like 2006, 2007, I used to work with a bank in Boston and helped them develop some technology around fixing this. and I was their first client to actually use their declined salvage product. But then they sold the bank to a bigger bank in 2012. And the bigger bank said, well, we don't care about solving this problem holistically. We just want to use this authorization optimization tool as a shiny object to attract and retain merchants. And I'm like, well, that doesn't work for me. I need something that works across all. Banks work across all platforms and really gets into the guts of the Visa MasterCard ecosystem. So I'm a serial entrepreneur. Self-taught coder. I've always had, you know, either tech businesses or tech enabled businesses. And so in 2012, I said, you know what?

Darryl Hicks:
I wanted to start messing around with this myself and hired a team of developers and it was all a rules-based system. And from 2012, 2016, it gave us, you know, way better performance than any other tool that we could find out there, but it was all internal use only. But the problem with rules is that they don't scale. Like if this, then that, if this, then that, but then you have conflicting rules. And then so you have to put them in a weighted algorithm and these decision trees, it just turns into spaghetti, right? And again, there's a lot of a lot. We had a lot of business, a lot at stake. So like, you know, getting an extra 1% could sometimes mean hundreds of thousands of dollars in transaction flow. And we had over a billion dollars in transactions, actually over a billion individual transactions in our data Mart in 2016.

Darryl Hicks:
And I said, you know what? It really seems like a problem built for machine learning. I used that word deliberately because I don't like it when people talk about AI too much. I mean, I use AI, we're an AI driven tool, but it's machine learning, right? So it's sophisticated pattern matching and, sired a team of devs from a struggling startup, vetted the crap out of them with some of the guys that you and I actually know through size Academy, came back with a re-sounding thumbs up. And in 2016, you rebuilt everything from scratch in Microsoft Azure using machine learning and saw this immediate massive spike in performance on recovering all these declined transactions. And I'm like, you know what? I think I want to take this and turn it into a standalone B2B SAAS business. As I know, I'm not the only one that has this problem, right, Dave.

Darryl Hicks:
Yeah, I had 20 late 2016, we decided to, we launched the technology for internal use and in April of 2017 had our first outside revenue as a SaaS business. So I kind of view that as being the birth of, the birth date of it. But I mean, but the real story is read already. We had the earned insights and the data and everything to enable us to get into that, that spanned back over a decade before we actually launched. So yeah, the big overnight success that has the best performing tool in the market, how that happened. Well, as you know, Dave, there's always a, there's always a story behind the story

Dave Nicolanti:
Overnight success. That's only like about 17 years in the making. Yeah, exactly. That's it. That's great stuff. So I, I, we understand a little bit about how flex plan works and you can recover payments. you mentioned an accountant updated earlier and what else could I use local businesses to do, or what's it look like for them to solve and fix that problem without something in place like a machine learning tool like flux Bay.

Darryl Hicks:
Yeah. So there's all kinds of low-hanging things. And I love kind of geeking out on this because even if you can't use our technology for some reason, there's a lot of things that you can do, especially in a smaller business that are good enough, right. Which especially in a smaller business, sometimes you just need good enough. So I kind of divide what we do into three categories, time transit and data cleanup time is if you have a declined payment re knowing when to retry at time of day, day of week, date of month, this works really well for NSF, but it also works well for do not honors. And if you ever see a transaction that comes back with a decline code that says, do not honor, that is almost a certain guarantee that you have bumped up against the fraud system at the issuing bank.

Darryl Hicks:
And they're declining your transaction because they think something sketchy is going on either with the card or with you or with something else. And this is usually like a good, solid, depending on the merchant, like about 40% of all your declines come back in this do not honor Calgary. So taking the dune on honors and retrying them at a better time actually helps them do because believe it or not. so w when we had a lot of data, right, we had like, right now, we're up to 5.3 billion transactions in our proprietary data, Mar and, and see these weird things, like all things being equal, same price points, same type of merchant, same, same acquires, same everything, right? JP Morgan, Chase Visa, debit credit card declines would be double at 2:00 AM what they were at 2:00 PM. Like, it doesn't mean you have a hundred percent decline rate at 2:00 AM.

Darryl Hicks:
It's just, the declines were double like what's going on there, right? It's because somebody in their infinite wisdom at the bank decided the different transactions running through in the middle of the night, it's a higher likelihood that it's fraud. And so, but what happens with like dev companies or like, you know, startups, they take their, all their batches of recurring billing transactions, and they queue them up for off hours when, when everyone's sleeping and they run it out, they run the batch at midnight at one o'clock in the morning. That's when I'll run all my transactions through not knowing that, unfortunately they're artificially driving up their decline rate and leaving a bunch of money on the table. the best time to retry transactions.
Again, if you don't have a machine learning tool that gets really deep on the individual transaction, if you just want a one size fits all approach, make sure you take your NSF and your do not honors and retry them on Fridays and Saturdays, and try to do it within business hours, ideally in the afternoon East coast time. And you will see right then and there a big, like magic all these NSF and do not honor all of a sudden, like 15, 20% of them, 22% of them, 30% of them come back approved. Whereas they were declined before what just happened. Well, I can tell you what happened, but just do it, just do that right.

Dave Nicolanti:
As you're going through that story, I'm thinking, well, well, we do, we do that. We do that. Like, I'm looking forward to working with you a little bit more for, for my day job over here.

Darryl Hicks:
No, and again, these are just, these are like simple things. Like if you don't know, you don't know. Right. The second thing is trends that, if you look at the really big merchants like Amazon and Netflix and Spotify, Microsoft, they never have just one merchant bank. They don't have to go to Stripe and just open up one account. Right? That's good enough if you're a small merchant, right? Because it can be a pain in the butt to have multiple relationships and do your load balancing and stuff. But why, why do those big merchants have multiple merchant processing relationships? Like in the case of Netflix, they process a certain percentage of their business with Worldpay and a certain percentage with chase paymentech. Why? Because they know that they will get a slightly higher approval ratio. If they take certain cards and run them through chase and other cards and run them through a Worldpay, not all merchant banks are created equal in the eyes of the issuers and depending on the risk profile and whether or not the issuing bank has had a bad experience with that, with that merchant bank, they start to increase the risk rating of transactions that flow through there.

Darryl Hicks:
so I always tell people, well, first of all, you should never have a single point of failure. If you've got any kind of meaningful subscription business. And you've got all these beautiful customers that have engaged with you, and you've got a product market fit, and you've collected all their payment information, you're holding it in a secure manner. I mean, if you lose your ability to process a Visa, MasterCard, that asset can never return it into cash in your bank account. That's a single point of failure in your business that needs to be addressed. And unfortunately that happens all the time. People are like, well, Stripe's never going to close my account. yeah, unfortunately that happens a lot more than you'd like to think. and it's not that Stripe wants to, it's that they're not a bank. They have a sponsoring bank, Wells Fargo that has all kinds of different rules that are changing all the time about who they'll work with, who they want, who they want.

Darryl Hicks:
I had a client the other day. He has a Russian national on his cap table who owns over 25% of the business. And Stripe was doing some new things, Wells Fargo was doing due diligence on their merchants as they always do once a year and discovered that, and, terminated their merchant account. It was like, what? Yeah, we have a Russian national that owns more than 25% of your business. so we're shutting down your processing. Wow. Yeah. Like just these random things that can come out of the blue, but also having a backup account and being able to leverage it and knowing, especially what MCC or in your merchant category code. I see this all the time merchant merchant category code is a four-digit number that you use often. You don't even know what it is, but when you apply for a merchant account, your merchant provider like Stripe or Braintree, or whoever has to, has to identify you as a merchant on the DS and ma network with a four digit code.

Darryl Hicks:
And that four digit merchant category code has a massive impact on your approval ratios. Like we're saying, it can be as low as this is really extreme, but there are some MCCs that approve an average of only 50% of the time. And some that approve 98% of the time. Right. All things being equal. So getting into the right MCC, and we've done that for even a few size businesses guys that you and I know where they're like, because they were selling a product that was something around, you know, debt collection and stuff like that. They ended up tagged as a debt collection, MCC, but really they're a SaaS business, a software business. And, and just switching them from that one, MCC to the SaaS, MCC, they saw an 8% increase in approval ratios. They went from like an 86% to like a 94% approval rate. It was good.

Dave Nicolanti:
I know we're kind of going to geek out on this a little bit, which I, which I love, I know for everybody else out there listening may or may not be totally into this, but numbers and just what the opportunity is. It's huge. Just want to kind of sum up real quick. I mean, if you're not able to use a company like flex pay, or you don't want to, there are ways you can do some of this stuff on your own. Just kinda sum up the basic one that at the very beginning, you talked about counting on data that can make a huge impact and just updating any fraudulent cards that were changed, expired cards. It seems like that leaves doing simple things like running those cards. There were times in the day you will get better results, Friday afternoons, Eastern time. Just think about that as an average, if you take it from 1:00 AM, 6:00 AM, whatever you're doing, try it in that time, then have your backup processor.

Dave Nicolanti:
Cause if Stripe decides, Hey, we're not going to work with it right now. You got to have a backup option. So some really powerful, really important stuff. You kind of need to have your backup plan there. So that's all great stuff, Joel, I love it. Let me ask you this. So I love listening to you talk also. I mean, it's, it's funny that we're talking, we're talking numbers, you're talking money coming in, you know, all the data and you're obviously excited about it. I'm sure you've had some big impacts with some customers and, and how, like it being inspiring and turning their business around, or maybe having a big impact. So do you have a story of maybe your most inspiring client, that you'd like to share? Yeah.

Darryl Hicks:
Yeah. I have a client. Well, we have some really big clients where, you know, I think there's one client in particular in December, we recovered $1.2 million in failed payments for them in one month, which was just massive and driving EBITDA and really kind of saved their quarter as a publicly traded company. but the stories that I really enjoy is I'm working with a really, really bright, group of guys, two brothers in San Diego, and they're incredibly gifted selling like a health and wellness product and they're doing it right. You know, like their chargebacks are super low. They really care about the brand. They care about company culture. They've got an incredible team of people. They put together these gorgeous offices and they were just running on razor thin margins. Like so many businesses are like, if you're not cheating in this space more often than not, you're running on really, really thin margins.

Darryl Hicks:
And they were down as low as, like, you know, seven, 8% net margin in their business after all was said and done. And they switched on flex Bay and we were able to recover 56% of all of their failed transactions on their merchant bank. But because they've already paid all the marketing costs and these are customers that have already said, yes, I want your product and signed up. It's very, very margin rich. Like we're talking like 60% gross margin, right? So a massive amount of that money that we've recovered flows straight down to the bottom line, we're able to take their net margin from six, 7% all the way up to 15% net margin money in their pockets. And, you know, I saw them go and, you know, buy cars for some of their lead executives at their Christmas party. I see what they're doing with, you know, donating to charities and their area of really avid donors.

Darryl Hicks:
Now they have so much more capital to invest into better hires. They have so much more capital to invest into better products and they sell really great products to a really engaged audience in the health and wellness space. And the reason why they're able to do all those things to invest in have all that impact is because they have a business that rather than just scraping by barely making it work has a little bit more grease between the wheels. And that's literally just because of what we were able to do and taking this ridiculous friction that has no business being there in the first place out of the payments ecosystem.
And when I see stories like that, that really kind of lights me up. It makes me feel like, you know, like this is, this is, this is good. I mean, like I could talk about the charities too. It's super fun to work with charities and actually help people give money to the charity that they want to give to and reduce the friction there. But I, as an entrepreneur, like entrepreneur to entrepreneur business leader, to business leader, when I get to see the impact I have on somebody's businesses makes me feel good.

Dave Nicolanti:
Yeah. They're just really incredible. And it doesn't matter what your monthly expenses are. I'm sorry, your monthly revenue is going from 6% or 15%, no matter what braggy fall into. And that's going to have a huge impact. And that's what we started this call off talking about magic money and then that money that's there, that's falling through the cracks that people are missing out on. And that's what you let companies do. And you find it for them, which is, I just find that incredible. So that's great stuff. Awesome. Daryl. So I'm going to put you on the spot right now. So you know who, you know, who's going to be listening here, Darryl. what w w what kind of usually share hack that all business owners could use right now, and regardless of what industry they're in, if they're a jammer, they're a restaurant. If they're a personal trainer investor, whatever, there's something that small business owners today can use in your years of infinite wisdom. Yeah.

Darryl Hicks:
I'll tell you that. There's a lot of lessons that I've learned over, you know, flex space, my seventh business. So definitely a serial entrepreneur. And the first, the first six were all organically funded and bootstrapped. and I'll tell you, it can be a really lonely ride as a business owner and as an entrepreneur sometimes, but what I would, what I've really learned, and what I'd love to share is that you are not alone. And there's a lot of people out there that want to help you more than you realize. And we're all kind of beat up right now on COVID and the pandemic. It's a really, really tough time for people. But if you step out there and like, you know, like there's a bunch of people in clubhouse now that are all like chatting and connecting with one another there's mastermind groups out there like you and I met each other through a SaaS mastermind, right?

Darryl Hicks:
Where size leaders get together and, and support one another and come together to learn, and a big piece of what we get out of those masterminds and groups is just even sometimes validation. Yeah. You're doing the right thing. Yeah. This is hard, but you're not alone. You're not alone. And so that's the one message I would say the one hack, like, even for me right now, I'm trying to hire a VP of marketing and it's like breaking my brain and I just can't find the right person. And I just took the time to set back and reach out to some of the people in my network and say, Hey, I'm having this problem and just be open and vulnerable about it. And, and, and has anybody else had a problem with this before? And am I thinking about this the right way? And boom had one of the investors in my company who says, Oh, I can introduce you to the COO of this other company over here.

Darryl Hicks:
And that CMO says, send me your job description. I'll clean it up. So that you're really fine to know the right people. And by the way, here's three candidates that you think would be good for you on LinkedIn. And I sent those over to my head Hunter. And next thing you know, I'm talking to these high quality people. How'd that all start because I lifted my hand up and I said, Hey, having a hard time. I'm lucky enough to have really good investors in my business. So they're already engaged and committed, but there are groups out there there's mastermind groups on LinkedIn and on Facebook and in clubhouse, and just put yourself out there and be willing to be open and vulnerable and say, Hey, I need help. And you'd be surprised. There's a lot of people out there, especially in the entrepreneurial communities who want to help.

Dave Nicolanti:
That's great advice. And it's something where it's tough to realize that because you gotta be smart enough to realize that, Hey, you don't know everything. And there's a certain, certain skill set that that requires, and you have to be, admitting to yourself, Hey, you're not perfect. And people think these small business owners and people starting their own business, they know everything. Guess what we don't, we're Derrick.

Darryl Hicks:
I'd even say, if you think, you know, everything, you're going to get a wake up call real quick, because

Dave Nicolanti:
Exactly, exactly. So, that's awesome advice to share. I mean, so go out and seek some, seek some, seek some help from people who've been through it too, are going through it and have been through it. Cause you're far from alone. And that that's awesome. I love hearing that. So, here's one of my favorite parts of interviewing people is I did kind of sit back and let you do the work for a second. So if we've been talking for a little bit and I love the conversation, what question did I miss? What's the question that I should ask you that can help small business owners, just from your years of experience and your seven different businesses that you've run. What am I messing up? What questions should I ask you?

Darryl Hicks:
Yeah, I'd say one of the things that I love to talk about is, and it kind of comes along with that same sort of theme of like, you're not alone. There's more people out there that want to help you then maybe you first realize that I often tell people that one of the smartest things that I ever did in building flex Bay was before I even had a single dollar of external revenue for external clients. I went and built an advisory board and stretched out to people in my network. And I even offered them in some cases, a little bit of equity in the company, like really super small amounts. But, cause I knew that this is a big problem and it's going to require a lot of help from really smart people. And I was humbled to see how many people said.

Darryl Hicks:
Yeah, absolutely. And, but I was very tactical about like, you know, you and I both know Dan Martell and Dan Martell talks about this and he says, you know, what are the eight things that if you had those eight things, your success as a small business owner would be an absolute foregone conclusion, but just, it's absolutely guaranteed and automatic that if you had those eight things, you would absolutely you'd be able to 10 X your business. And it's not even a question as to whether you'd be able to 10 X your business, it would be a foregone conclusion. And maybe you don't want 10 X your business, but just imagine like, and every business has got kind of like the top eight things. And once you identify what those eight things are, then you can start to think about, well, who are the people that could possibly fill those buckets that I know, or maybe even that I don't know that I could reach out to cold on LinkedIn and tell them about what it is that I'm doing.

> *every business has got kind of like the top eight things. And once you identify what those eight things are, then you can start to think about, well, who are the people that could possibly fill those buckets*

Darryl Hicks:
And even if it's not a fit for them, maybe they know somebody that would be a fit who can come and help me out. And building that advisory board was just such a game changer, having this group of like really invested, committed, smart people that check certain boxes for me, in my business was awesome. And, and I, and I love telling other people about that, because again, you'd be surprised how many people out there are willing to, they understand that building a business is hard and you are deciding to lift your hand up and say, yeah, I'm going to go do this, but there's other people that want to help you along that journey.

Dave Nicolanti:
And, and that, that advisory board, it sounds all nice and fancy, but I mean, it can, for every type of business out there is your board. I mean, if you're opening up your own diner, I mean, maybe you have a mentor that you worked with that had their own restaurant beforehand. It's someone who you can go to and shoot the breeze with, keep your sanity they've gone through, they can bounce ideas off each other, just again, realizing that you're not alone out there is so powerful.

Darryl Hicks:
And yeah. I love that you said that Dave, like that's such an important point. Like don't, you don't have to think about it as being all formal, like an advisory board or like tell me people I would like to have you on my board of advisors. And just like somebody that, you know, like again, be, be very, like, be rational about it and use that like the eight boxes, the eight buckets is a framework, but then once you identify those people just like reach out and hang out and shoot the breeze with them and get that advice. Sometimes all you just need, like you said, as a hearing year and some validation, or like, you know, one little tweak that improves your business by a half a percent, but then, you know, next week it's another half a percent from somewhere else. And another week is a half a percent from somewhere else. And next thing you know, you're rolling.

Dave Nicolanti:
And, and one thing that I love from just doing this podcast here is being introduced and talking to different people. And one thing that is so common, everybody wants to help. And everybody's been through people who've been in your shoes before. Like if you're a business owner having a challenge, there are people out there who can, and who will help you. You just have to find them and ask. And there's so many boards out there, whether it's Facebook, whether it's, I mean, there's so many different Facebook groups and it'd be a great place to start, but even just looking at your mentors, going in, using them, asking them to help cause either they will. So that's really powerful stuff. I love that. So Daryl, this has been awesome chatting with you. tell me a little bit about where can our audience find you, where are you most active? Like, whether it's on social or website, hook us up, where can we find you?

Darryl Hicks:
I'm not a huge social media guy, but I am on Facebook. It's probably the platform I spend the most time on just because I'm in a lot of really high quality closed groups. So I don't really post much, but it's a great way for people to find me and kind of reach out and DME, also flex pay.io. Our website has contact information there. And my email is super easy. It's just daryl@flexpay.io. So I don't mind throwing that out there if any of this resonates and you want a little bit of like tips or advice. I allocate a certain percentage of my week, every week to kind of just like giving back and doing like the mentorship and talking to like kids who are getting into startups or like entrepreneurs who are struggling with something. And I love that kind of stuff. Kind of like giving back stuff that lights you up and it makes you feel good. So

Dave Nicolanti:
It makes your day worthwhile. Yeah. So Daryl that's awesome. Everybody will have the information underneath in the show notes as well for you to check out, but, Daryl, we appreciate you being on here. I wish you the best of luck. I look forward to it. I know we talked about doing some work together as well. So William bring all that, bring all that around and wish you the best of luck moving forward bud, we appreciate you. Thanks for having me. Dave, this was a lot of fun.

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