

00;00;03;16 - 00;00;11;08

Darci

Welcome to Brand Jam, the brand strategy podcast for colorful and compassionate brands. I'm Darci, the candy fueled copywriter behind Sweet Tooth Creative.

00;00;11;08 - 00;00;20;07

Chloe

And I'm Chloe, owner of conscious design studio Chloe Arielle Design. On the show, we'll be talking about what it's really like to build a brand from scratch when you're a business of one.

00;00;20;09 - 00;00;25;21

Darci

And how to find what works for you so you can create a brand that grows with your business without burning yourself out.

00;00;25;25 - 00;00;32;08

Chloe

At Brand Jam, we believe there's no one right way to be, and embracing our differences enhances the experience for everyone.

00;00;32;13 - 00;00;41;12

Darci

So if you're a fan of bold flavored branding and are trying to do business better, come hang out. We're so glad you're here.

00;00;41;15 - 00;00;51;17

Darci

[outtake snippet] As with all things, you find what works for you. Don't let us tell you it has to be this one way. Don't let anyone tell you it has to be this one way.

00;00;51;20 - 00;01;00;12

Chloe

[outtake snippet] It's important to recognize when you do the thing that you wanted to do, and give yourself grace when you don't.

00;01;00;14 - 00;01;07;17

Darci

Hey, everybody. Welcome to the final episode of season one for Brand Jam. We made it, Chloe.

00;01;07;18 - 00;01;09;29

Chloe

Yay! Hooray!

00;01;10;02 - 00;01;34;10

Darci

Today we're talking about timelines. You know, if you're like me, they might be the bane of your existence. But just generally, like, how you think about what you get done in what amount of time. Obviously, timelines can be super important when it comes to client projects, but I think with DIY branding, there's a lot of self-imposed timelines that maybe aren't serving us. So that's why we want to talk about that today.

00;01;37;05 - 00;02;03;22

Chloe

Yeah, we want you to be able to build your brand without burning yourself out. Sometimes we get really excited about something and we make a lot of goals and timelines, and it's all really great. But then when it comes to actually doing the thing, it's not always super realistic. And sometimes sticking to those timelines and milestones can just lead straight to burnout.

00;02;03;24 - 00;02;19;25

Darci

Yeah, and you just end up beating yourself up and that doesn't help you make progress. So today we're going to talk a little bit about how we manage that now, compared to, you know, when we were first starting out. Because. I don't know about you, Chloe, but for me, I struggle with both. I struggle with thinking, "I should have this done already. This should only take me so long." And then, of course, it's never that simple, or I'll be like, I'll get into hyperfocus mode and spend way too long on one thing. And then I'm like, "why did I waste so much time on that?" And really, it was probably my subconscious being like, "whoa, but if we waste time on this fun design thingy, then you don't have to go do the scary next step that comes after it." So it's a learning process. As with so many things, when you're first starting out building your business, but finding kind of your flow and identifying where you're getting yourself stuck and where you're letting other people make you feel bad for going a certain speed, that getting getting all of that out of your head and finding confidence in your own method, I think, is kind of where we want to get to.

00;03;22;24 - 00;03;37;09

Chloe

And it's not something that happens overnight, like, I mean I still struggle with timing and timelines and it's, yeah, you're always, as with life, learning more, growing, developing things and figuring things out.

00;03;37;14 - 00;03;40;08

Darci

Yeah, they get to evolve just like everything else.

00;03;40;08 - 00;03;41;05

Chloe

Mmhmm

00;03;41;07 - 00;03;57;19

Darci

Progress is the goal. But like there's no certain amount of progress or there's no, I mean, deadlines are so frequently arbitrary and often don't serve you. So, I mean, sometimes I do. Chloe asked me for a deadline all the time.

00;03;57;22 - 00;04;13;13

Chloe

I do. I need a deadline, or I will procrastinate until the last— I mean, I still will. That's why I have to set fake deadlines for myself so that I can get anything done in the world, but also, fake deadlines are great because then they give you buffer time. If you procrastinate the first deadline, then you aren't completely screwed for the second deadline or the real one.

00;04;18;18 - 00;04;44;02

Darci

Yeah. So hey, maybe you need a bunch of fake deadlines. Maybe you're like me and I honestly almost never have deadlines. I have kind of like, phases that I'm like, "this phase should take about this long," type of thing. Milestones, I guess I go by, more than deadlines, but I certainly, I can relate back, you know, years ago in college, like deadlines did motivate me to a certain extent. It just wasn't great for my nervous system. But as with all things like, you know what? You find what works for you. Don't let us tell you it has to be this one way. Don't let anyone tell you it has to be this one way.

00;04;56;12 - 00;05;17;09

Chloe

And I think it differs too, like depending on what your business is like, when you're planning things out, like client work versus my business are two different things. Like client work, I'm going to get it done when it needs to get done. But working on my business, are the things that, like, tends to get put on the backburner. And those are the kind of the things that we're talking about today that are really hard to progress sometimes.

00;05;24;06 - 00;05;43;28

Darci

Yeah, definitely. I think probably by the time we've started a business, maybe I'm wrong, but most people, you know, when they're being held accountable by someone else can deliver, or I hope they can deliver. But this is definitely more about, you know, all these different things that you have to develop as you're developing your brand. You know, like the identity, yes, but also the systems and processes in your business and you know, what tech you use and what this and that, and you know, all the little problems that pop up and you have to find a solution for, and then hope that that solution grows with your business. It's a lot to juggle as a small business owner, and there's a lot of learning required, and learning can be slow. So this is more about kind of like figuring out how to juggle all of that, but also like keep it moving, you know?

00;06;11;25 - 00;06;31;23

Chloe

Yeah, it's all about finding a middle ground. And there's a really fine line. It's like setting goals is really important. But also, if you're on the edge of burnout and it's an arbitrary goal that you've set for yourself that no one else knows about, the world is not going to stop turning because you miss this goal, but it will save your mental health, like you can probably miss that deadline. However, it's important to make sure that you don't stop progressing because you missed one of your goals.

00;06;41;29 - 00;07;06;12

Darci

Yeah. And it's really, I mean, it's a skill that you have to really, like, build up over time to be able to juggle long term goals and short term goals and integrate that into what you're doing from day to day. Like, it's a balance and finding it is, you know, not simple. So because there's always, you know, more—people have demands put on them all the time. You know, people have responsibilities outside of just building their business; caregiving responsibilities or, you know, taking care of them, their own health or, you know, big events pop up and you're like, “okay, great. Now I'm also handling that”; like it's a lot going on. So if you feel overwhelmed, it's not you. That's how things are. But you can get better about managing it, and it can feel better if you keep looking for that

balance. So basically set goals, but don't let missing them stop you from progressing. You know, watch for things that are wasting your time or you're using to procrastinate. But you know, also be gentle and supportive with yourself.

00:07:47;11 - 00:07:52;14

Chloe

It's important to like, recognize when you do things that you wanted to do.

00:07:52;15 - 00:07:53;21

Darci

Yeah. Give yourself credit.

00:07:53;21 - 00:07:55;21

Chloe

And give yourself grace when you don't.

00:07:55;21 - 00:08:09;22

Darci

Yeah. Give yourself credit and give yourself grace. I like that. And expects things to take a lot longer than you think. You expect them to take, or especially expect them to take longer than other people say they'll take, especially if they're selling you something.

00:08:09;25 - 00:08:28;18

Chloe

Yes. It just reminds me of, like other people are experts in things. If they say it's going to take a certain amount of time, like it reminds me of, like when you look up a recipe online and it's like, "oh, this took me 20 minutes to build this entire soup." And then I do it and I'm like three hours later, still chopping vegetables and like, wait a second, .

00:08:28;18 - 00:08:32;03

Darci

Takes me 20 minutes to chop a carrot. Relatable. So like, really all, you know, online marketing advice should come with a disclaimer of, like, "your mileage may vary." There's too many variables, too many, you know, privileges, people, whole depressions people experience, levels of experience itself, levels of support, other obligations. It's all, you know, there's unfortunately rarely an easy button. So yeah, give yourself grace. Give yourself credit for what you do get done, even if it's less than you, you know, wanted it to be.

00:09:07;12 - 00:09:15;29

Chloe

And again, it's a work in progress. I think this podcast itself is a good example of Darci and I working through this process.

00;09;16;01 - 00;09;27;29

Darci

Totally. I mean, we're okay. We're on. We did ten episodes for this first season and they're half an hour each. So you're like, "oh, what did that take? Maybe a month to record or something?" No, listen, listen. Real talk. I first reached out to Chloe about starting the podcast in April of 2023, and.

00;09;39;25 - 00;09;44;18

Chloe

For the record, right now it is October 2024.

00;09;44;20 - 00;10;10;22

Darci

Yes, exactly. Thank you. Yeah. So to give you an idea: so, it's today, it's October 2024. First reached out to Chloe about co-hosting with my little crazy idea in April of 2023. I think we started recording in September of that same year, 2023. We initially finished recording what we thought was going to be the whole first season by around like the beginning of November, I think. And then we published episode one in May of this year. So again it's October, started publishing in May. We've been flying by the seat of our pants for a lot of it. I mean, I like planning, so the planning was fine. But I've never recorded a podcast either. I mean, I've been a guest. It's not the same thing as creating your own, so. And like, we did have help in, you know, at certain stages. Shout out Briar Harvey at the Neurodivergent Media Network. She was awesome, and helped us get started. But there's still just so much to learn as you go. And, I mean, I don't know, Chloe, what do you think about us learning as we go?

00;10;52;04 - 00;11;10;13

Chloe

I mean, yeah, there was, I mean, recording it. We were like, "oh, yeah, we have this plan. We know what we want to talk about. No big deal!" for the first part of recording. That's why we were able to like, do that relatively quickly compared to the rest of the timeline. And then it was like wait. Yeah. I mean. Even that.

00;11;11;29 - 00;11;15;19

Darci

Even the recording, like the early recording sessions are mostly like.

00;11;15;19 - 00;11;16;05

Chloe

Oh my gosh.

00;11;16;05 - 00;11;22;18

Darci

Us giggling, speaking like, I messed that up so, so much, so much editing for poor Chloe.

00;11;22;20 - 00;11;27;13

Chloe

Yeah. Which then led to the editing process. Which always took longer than I thought it was going to take. I still haven't mastered the timeline of that yet. And hopefully one day we will be able to outsource that. But for now, I'm setting fake deadlines and doing my best to make them.

00;11;43;05 - 00;12;08;27

Darci

Yes. And I am trying to be supportive by not messing up the recording as much. But that being said, we are recording episode ten because things didn't go as planned. We had to re-record episode nine because for corrupted, we combine two episodes at one point. So our nice little round ten episode season that we recorded last fall ended up being nine episodes, and then we were like, "well, should we do a 10th episode?" And I was like, "sure, let's make it about timelines, because, you know."

00;12;13;05 - 00;12;19;05

Chloe

Yeah. And I mean, there was so much we had to like research and stuff and—

00;12;19;05 - 00;12;21;22

Darci

Just even like, picking a platform.

00;12;21;22 - 00;12;24;03

Chloe

It's just the amount of calls we had.

00;12;24;08 - 00;12;25;27

Darci

Going back and forth about.

00;12;25;29 - 00;12;28;11

Chloe

Just the publishing and recording software.

00;12;28;11 - 00;12;48;29

Darci

Yes, yes, so many notes about that. But yeah, I mean, and that's how it is with anything that you're doing for the first time, you're going to be you think, "oh, make podcasts, need ten episodes at 20 to 40 minutes, a thing like, how long could that take me?" Guess what, my friend? So much longer than you think. That being said, I'm glad we did it.

00;12;51;11 - 00;13;08;24

Chloe

Me too. And I think the important thing with our process, that we were good at taking turns, backing each other up when we needed to, and like we were, I guess we were, We gave each other credit and we also gave each other grace. But we hold each other accountable too.

00;13;09;02 - 00;13;30;04

Darci

Yes, I personally had a lot of anxiety in the beginning about, you know, even though I knew Chloe was a nice person, we, you know, weren't as close then, like she was just my internet design friend. But I just felt like our vibes were good together and that, you know, we had attempted a collaboration prior to that, for another thing and it hadn't worked out. And actually, I was like, encouraged by how that went. Like nobody got salty about it. Everyone was understanding about life happens, things pop up, and that collab didn't work out. That helped me feel secure enough to be like, "all right, do you want to try and do this thing?" Because I am not someone who's like, "I've always wanted to have a podcast!" so it's a little bit of work for me to feel comfortable being this out front. And then you also have, you know, I'm chronically ill, I am a parent. You know, life happens. I mean, how many things have happened in this time? Like we've had natural disasters, horrific global events, multiple deaths in our families. You know, my kid has been sick, like my partner was in the hospital. All this stuff cropped up on both sides for each of us, and it was really lovely that I had a co-host who was so flexible and like, "that's fine, don't worry about it. Take care of what you need to take care of. We'll come back to this."



00;14;32;09 - 00;14;40;11

Chloe

Yeah. And we always did come back to it. That that was an important. Yeah. Because it would have been really easy to be like—

00;14;40;12 - 00;14;41;06

Darci

Exactly.

00;14;41;06 - 00;14;52;03

Chloe

“Okay. We've recorded most of it. But like all this stuff is happening. It's overwhelming. Like, let's just give up.” We didn't do that, which I'm really proud of us for.

00;14;52;06 - 00;15;20;09

Darci

Yes, I, on my own, often when I put something on the backburner for my business, it stays on the backburner. I, it's not great. I'm like, “what? Oh yeah, I did start that. Oh, that was cool.” I come across it like two years later and I'm like, “oh I should have finished this.” So that was the nice thing about, you know having the partners, we were able to be like okay we are going to come back to that even if we have to be like is now good, do you need another week. Like what's, you know, check in with each other but keep things moving.

00;15;25;06 - 00;15;46;05

Chloe

Yeah. And I think we always like yeah when we missed a deadline we would schedule a new meeting or a new deadline just to make sure. And then we or a new check in and we would check in and be like, “okay, are we feeling it? Can we do it?” Or just to make sure that we kept moving along, even if it was a snail's pace.

00;15;46;07 - 00;16;08;16

Darci

Yes. Yeah, yeah I love snails. So it was, it was good. But yeah I think we said I think we both said in the beginning multiple times to each other that like we wanted to do this, but we didn't want it to be something that added a huge amount of stress for either of us. Like we both have our own businesses that we had to run and clients that we wanted to take care of. And, you know, other offers or or, you know, marketing that we wanted to build out that, you know, was a podcast part of the bigger picture? Absolutely. But it wasn't our only focus, and we didn't want to feel pressure from this. We really wanted it

to be like, this is great, and you know, something we really wanted to just have out in the world because, we both talked about we wanted to make the podcast that we wish we could have found years ago. And we did that. And it never I never got tired of it. I never, you know, like it never started to feel bad, which I feel like when there's a lot of pressure or self-imposed timelines that you're not meeting and stuff like.

00;16;52;14 - 00;16;53;16

Chloe

Mmhmm. Yeah.

00;16;53;18 - 00;16;58;03

Darci

So it always felt good to come back to even the parts I didn't like.

00;16;58;08 - 00;17;03;01

Chloe

You know, I know like there was a lot of anxiety at times. Yes however—

00;17;03;01 - 00;17;03;08

Darci

But not pressure.

00;17;03;08 - 00;17;28;11

Chloe

Right. No. It was, and I, I think that's something maybe we can practice, even, like, in our solo businesses too, is like, let's pretend there's a little Darci now. And if you're listening, you know, like, pretend that you have a business partner and, and they're experiencing the thing that you're experiencing and like, how would you react to that? How would you treat them and treat yourself that way.

00;17;31;04 - 00;17;47;27

Darci

That's a good point. Like I— sometimes in my own, like in my personal life, with my self-talk, I try and actually, like, turn it around in my head, like, “what would you say to a friend?” Right? Because how I talk to a friend is so different than how I would talk to myself. And so I've been trying to work on that. And I think that's true of this, too. Like I think that's a really good point of like, imagine you have a business partner.

00;17;56;15 - 00;17;57;22

Chloe

Mmhmm

00;17;57;24 - 00;18;10;02

Darci

Like, hey, if that helps, being a solo service provider is weird. Like if an imaginary business partner helps by all means I, I might try that, for sure.

00;18;10;05 - 00;18;13;21

Chloe

Yeah I think I will too.

00;18;13;23 - 00;18;34;22

Darci

Yeah. So I mean ultimately we kept things fluid but moving forward. And I've definitely like taken— some of that came, you know, from how we ran our businesses in the first place. But I definitely feel like I've grown in that. I've gotten stronger in that from doing the podcast. And that's coming back to my business.

00;18;34;22 - 00;18;52;21

Chloe

And I think I've also gotten better at like, distinguishing between times when it's like, I'm on the edge of burnout or I have no energy, or there's like things happening and I physically, like, recording the podcast would be— detrimental seems like a big word, but it would not be beneficial. Like it would. It would be.

00;18;52;21 - 00;19;11;12

Darci

Like when it's not like, it has too high of a cost. Yeah, like, yeah. Or like it's just not going to turn out. like there's times when it's like, a “lift” to record or to do whatever, whatever task it is. So it's not always going to feel good. Like we weren't like, “oh, we feel like recording.” So we're only recording when we feel like it. Absolutely not. We totally had to push ourselves to record. But I will say that I, I did a better job of judging when I should push myself and when I shouldn't.

00;19;25;09 - 00;19;26;08

Chloe

Exactly.

00;19;26;08 - 00;19;50;21

Darci

And I think that's a hard thing to distinguish. I mean, I'm chronically ill. I've had, I've been chronically ill since I was 20 and so, you know, at this point in my life, I have over a decade experience of, like, pacing myself. And that's ultimately what, like, pacing is in a chronic illness context is, you know, determining if an action, it has too high of a cost for your body. And even with that, it's like it's taken me so long to get good at it. I really only feel like I've gotten good at it in, like, the last couple of years. So. And some of that's because I've also gotten more tools and answers for my health issues that have helped make pacing possible, but it's also so much of a mental thing. So and I think that's true for, you know, I think it's something that carries over and is very applicable in small business.

00;20;19;25 - 00;20;20;24

Chloe

Mmhmm. Okay. So basically try to be realistic and learn what you are capable of, what your own capacity is.

00;20;29;07 - 00;20;34;13

Darci

Well, and within that remember that it fluctuates. Everyone's capacity fluctuates.

00;20;34;13 - 00;20;43;28

Chloe

Right. I guess instead of learning what your capacity is, try to be aware in the moment that you're making decisions where your capacity is.

00;20;43;28 - 00;21;12;29

Darci

Yeah. And practice prioritizing both short and long term goals because like that takes time to figure out the balance. So like understanding when you are prioritizing tasks, you know how the thing you want to do actually impacts your business. A lot of times that means prioritizing paid client work, but then you also have to find a way to work in the long term strategies, that evergreen content you want to make that's going to attract people in the future.

00;21;12;29 - 00;21;16;20

Chloe

Launching any promotion and any offerings.

00;21;16;20 - 00;21;36;06

Darci

Yeah, like you can't— You will burn out if you are only focused on the immediate here now, but you'll spend all your time procrastinating if you are only focused on like, well, long term, this is what I envision. You'll stay behind the scenes building instead of putting yourself out there. So you got to find a balance with both.

00;21;36;06 - 00;21;40;09

Chloe

Which is not easy, which takes time to figure out.

00;21;40;13 - 00;21;43;26

Darci

Even with our handy dandy tips. Yeah, this is so going to be a process.

00;21;43;27 - 00;22;05;13

Chloe

Yeah. And remember, you know, to celebrate your progress that you make, even if it's less than you wanted it to be, giving yourself that recognition relieves a lot of pressure. I feel like, and gives you permission to— You made some progress. You can keep moving. You don't need to like, freeze up and stop.

00;22;05;15 - 00;22;24;24

Darci

Yeah, and it keeps you, forcing yourself to give yourself credit, keeps you from becoming defeated, I think. I think it's a helpful tool for avoiding that feeling of defeat when you don't make the goal you want. How did you say it earlier in the episode, Chloe? give yourself grace and give yourself credit.

00;22;24;24 - 00;22;27;03

Chloe

Yeah, give yourself grace and give yourself credit.

00;22;27;03 - 00;22;29;19

Darci

Yeah yeah. You need both.

00;22;30;06 - 00;22;33;27

Chloe

Happy timeline making.

00;22;34;00 - 00;22;36;08

Darci

Thanks for joining us for our first season.

00;22;36;08 - 00;22;37;15

Chloe

We'll see you next season.

00;22;37;15 - 00;22;40;15

Darci

And yeah, we'll see you next season.

00;22;40;16 - 00;22;50;07

Chloe

And if you have any questions or suggestions for season two, feel free to reach out to us. Our email is Brand Jam Pod at gmail.com.

00;22;50;07 - 00;23;02;29

Darci

You can also reach out to us on Instagram or Threads. We'd love to know what you'd like to hear in season two. Thanks so much for joining us this season. It's been awesome.

00;23;03;02 - 00;23;07;20

Darci

That's it for this episode of Brand Jam. Check out the show notes for links to the resources we talked about.

00;23;07;20 - 00;23;14;06

Chloe

If this episode hit the spot, don't forget to subscribe and leave us a review. That helps Brand Jam reach more listeners, so we really appreciate it.

00;23;14;10 - 00;23;21;21

Darci

Thanks so much for joining us. We'll see you next time.

00;23;21;24 - 00;23;26;20

Chloe

I won't say, I know I won't make a joke about, hopefully season two won't be a year from now. But because it might be, it very well might be it.

00;23;31;17 - 00;23;36;09

Darci

It very well might be. And we will give ourselves grace and credit.

00;23;36;11 - 00;23;37;13

Chloe

Okay, let's stop recording.