January 2023 - Blair Wilson - How to Scale Back, See Less Clients, and Work ON the Business

Lawrence: Welcome everyone to HIT Business Membership and to January's training, so January 23. First training of the year, Blair. Quite fortunate to be the one to kick it off there. Well, I'm quite fortunate there.

For new members, we do this every single month. It's always some kind of training that focuses on the problems that you have, the sticking points, the plateaus you face in your specifically high intensity training business. Every bit of content in here is tailored to high intensity training business because that's what we do. We do live Q&As or we do trainings like this that is pre-recorded, and we are trying to do more live Q&As this year so that you guys can engage, and interact, and ask the questions that you have.

The topic today is scaling back, seeing less clients, and working on the business. Those are pretty big interrelated things that I get asked a lot about by my guests and the people want to learn how to do that. I have the perfect guest for this. His name is Blair Wilson. He is a good friend. He is overly generous in sharing the Membership. He is the co-Founder of MedX Precision Fitness in Toronto, Canada.

Welcome to the Membership again mate. Good to see you.

Blair: Thanks pal. Thanks for having me.

Lawrence: Of course. A lot has changed in your life. Obviously you've had a child which is a big change. But you moved away, you bought a property in Ottawa and you're living there. Let's just start there. Can you give us the state of the nation for Blair Wilson? What has changed in the last couple of years?

Blair: I think maybe the last time we even were on Zoom together, I don't if I was in Toronto or I was here. But regardless, we moved back in September. My wife and I and our, at that time, 1-year old we're moving closer to grandparents, closer to Noah's cousin, more space, different pace, and all that kind of stuff. Toronto is a wonderful city. I've been there for 13 years. But I kept the facility there and it's running and rocking and all that kind of stuff now. Everything is pretty good I might say.

Lawrence: Love it. How did you feel about making that transition? That must have been pretty scary moving five hours drive away, right?

Blair: Yeah, five hours. It's usually stressful. It had been a 5-year goal as corny as that sounds. Pre-COVID, 2019, we sat down and we're like okay this is what we want to do, we don't know how we are going to do it, but if we start now it will give me time to get the systems in place to be able to run the facility without the facility having me in it. It had been a long discussion and we knew that we wanted to do it but we didn't know when. And then, COVID happened. It was almost the perfect opportunity to do it because I had pulled

back through all of the lockdowns. We talked about this a bunch and I was needling and asking my staff to do most of the training so that we could keep them employed so we could have the subsidies which kept them employed further which was a confounding effect. I've backed out in the training at that time naturally. And then, I sat down with everybody, well before we did this, my staff and said, "Hey guys, look, this is what I'm thinking. Where is your head at? I'm not asking you to commit to me for the next 15-20 years. But I'm thinking about making this change and this is how it will impact you and this is how it will impact me." Everybody was super gung ho because I am literally the luckiest guy on the planet. They were up for it and then we just went to work and did it.

Lawrence: Let's pause there. What is it that made them so gung ho?

Blair: Again, touching on the lucky thing. I've got a group right now that is just super passionate, super good with people, they love the training, they love the opportunity that MedX Precision Fitness has the ability to provide for them, and they also understand that if they don't put in the work, opportunity would be less. They are a really cool group of people that are motivated by the potential to create their own story within the facility. I don't think this is actually part of our conversation but there are so many different things that go into keeping your staff happy and motivated and it is not just money. We

compensate fairly I think but we also enable time off and growth paths towards x, y, and z.

Lawrence: How do you enable growth?

Blair: It's not just a matter of doing this number of sessions and getting this much money. There are some of the more things that have to go into what your trainers get compensated. There is fair market value, and there are achievements, and there are certifications and qualifications. It's one thing to sit down and have a map that your staff can follow and check off boxes and get more money through. But we try to sit down with everybody and reverse engineer what they want to get out of the position. Because of that the ones with the highest hopes end up being the stickiest staff members. If you have somebody who has super lofty goals and then you help them get there first three out of ten they are probably going to want to stick around and get the next 7, or 8, or 9, or 10.

I haven't had too many situations in which I can argue against that. That's not because I pick other people… people who come to the door. It's just because I haven't had that many exposures. But if you get 100 different staff members you're going to have maybe 15-20 bad experiences, and we haven't pat 100. I've been really lucky in that regard. So choose your own adventure within the confines of our operations. That's the way we look at it

so you end up with people that align with what you want to do and where you want to go with the business.

Lawrence: This is great. Obviously, this is a whole podcast training content on its own and we've covered it to some extent. Well, quite well actually inside the Membership in terms of hiring and retaining great trainers, growth development plans, compensations, and all of these things. But you just really affirmed that with what you're saying there. You are clearly a good leader. You've developed good leadership skills and to give you this flexibility that you now have. What goes into that is probably a great hiring process as well.

Obviously, we are not going to do a deep dive on that today. We are going to pan back and talk about some of the other bits. But what would you say were the top books, resources, or things that helped you to help with designing plans that really have endeared your team to you and to the MedX PF vision?

Blair: I think that's such an interesting question because you go through the Top 10s and everybody has got their Body by Science, Question and Answer, and Ellington Darden's, and all these other different books that I can't pull out of the back of my head. I think it is more important than a book that you tell your staff, number two read and then you discuss it with them and hopefully

they apply it when you're shadowing them. And hopefully they apply it when you're not shadowing them.

We've talked about it before. We've got HITuni which was huge that we customized at the start. Right off the bat you're putting somebody who is probably already certified in something else into something that's customized for your business. It right away shows that you're invested in their education. Whether or not they think the certification is valuable, or cool, or anything doesn't matter. But it is there and it's neat because it shows you're organized and committed and all that kind of stuff.

We've started putting people through IART as well which has been really cool because then you're also showing, "Can you do x, y, z? We're going to invest in you again." When we get somebody to do a certification, we pay for it and ask for a 12-month commitment. If you leave within 12 months you have to pay us back the certification which has been good for us so far.

Not necessarily books and reading but you're showing that you will and want to invest rather than you will sit there and command them to educate themselves I think is super helpful. I'm also recognizing that maybe I'm saying that because that's what I would want.

Lawrence: It seems to work well there.

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Blair: I mean, it's cool. And then, the third thing I don't even think of is a book or anything like that as a resource. I think it's more so a matter of being that you work with your team. Yeah, you are the guy that's sitting there telling them how much you can afford the payment and what they should be doing and all that kind of stuff. You talk about what the heck they want and you never discuss with them where they want to get to. How the heck can you guide them there? If you're not helping them to get to where they want to go. Things have totally changed. People aren't scared to just get up and go to a different place of work. People aren't even scared to leave a job without having another job to go to. I think it is more what you show you would invest in your staff monetarily or version of time than it is necessary to read this book and do this thing.

Lawrence: Yeah, love it. Just panning back but obviously that's a huge part of this is having this great culture and making sure trainers understand what the plan is and then like you say backward engineering their own goals. And there's a number of different elements that went into that that you talked about. Again, there's resources that we will link to in the thread to this so that you as a member can actually dive into how you can do the same.

You mentioned other things as well which is really fascinating here. You talked about you are thinking about doing this because it is aligned with your long term family plans so you started building the systems out. I think that's

a great way to do this. I think this is something that a lot of us don't do. When I talk to people and ask, "What are you trying to achieve?" They don't even know what they want to achieve in the next year, let alone in the next five years. They have a vague goal and because it is not solidified it is not likely to happen. It is way more productive to visualize what you want. Sure life happens and stuff gets in the way and maybe you end up achieving something totally different. But having a directional goal is important that's focused on what you actually want.

You went to work and develop the systems, doing the systems in order to make it possible. What did that look like? I'm just curious, what were the key systems that maybe you didn't have in place that you needed to get in place in order to make the transition?

Blair: Right, cool. That's a cool question because there are 958 microsystems within your business and then mico microsystems, and then there's macro. If you think about the whole thing, where do you start? And I think if you think about the whole thing and where do you start you end up maybe doing nothing or you're too scared to make a decision because it's the wrong path? Or maybe it seems too big in your head or it's too small and you'll just inevitably accomplish it anyway.

I think I'm definitely guilty of this. People can get trapped in the paradox of choice: which way do I go, which thing do I start with. It's pretty cliché to just say just start. But I will talk about it from the management perspective first. Who am I going to rely on to run this place when I'm gone, what do they need to know, how are they going to communicate that to new staff, and then how I'm going to oversee their communications to the new staff. Maybe that's backwards, maybe it is forwards, and maybe it is sideways. Who cares? That's where I started. The lockdowns are literally building houses in docks, and decks and all this kind of stuff instead of training, and I have a lot of free time outside of that so I was like, "I just have to start somewhere." Because if I waste this opportunity I'm never going to have it again. I'm never going to have this much free time. I'm never going to have this really training. I'm never going to have the opportunity to sit down with my staff whenever we want because there was nothing else to do. You couldn't go to restaurants. You couldn't go out and do bla…bla...bla.

I started with Luca and Stevie, our managers. I looked at what their skill sets were. I designed a managerial position for each one of them with input from them and we refined it over a year. It's like, "Okay, this is what you're good at so let's try this." "Oh, okay, you're actually not that great at this particular subset of that skill so how do we refine it so that you are good at it." What we ended up with was a Manager of Client Experience, and you can throw anything in that bag you want to and the Director of Training. Luca is the

Director of Training. Stevie is the Director of Client Experience. The two of them have their own columns of responsibility and then they have columns that overlap and each one of them has to do those jobs. In those two roles you pretty much have everything that I don't do. I do administrative stuff. I'm like a glorified reception person right now. I love it because I get to chat with those guys and work on, and answer emails, and do all these really fun stuff to drive the business exactly where I go in an uninterrupted perspective.

We started with the managerial roles and then we started working on staff training and development within those two things and that included HITuni, and that included IART, and it also included a whole bunch of other documentation that we wanted to make sure were included. We try to get so detailed and redundant that it wasn't taken for granted. Everybody was to read absolutely everything from all the way through the alphabet and then if something happened that went wrong, just look at this, and then we'll talk about it again. Refer to this and then we'll talk about it again. You've been instructed to do a refresher and we'll talk about it again. That's an exhausting one that I literally don't think ever ends. It can start with how do you do an introductory session and in the middle of it can be how do you set up a 6-week program for an intermediate female trainee with knee and lower back problems. It can be describing their protocols and all that kind of stuff. But it can also include things like what closed shoes do you wear? How do you have brand consistency from A to B? Because we didn't contract any of that

out, it's a constantly evolving, and changing, and adding document that is super cool.

I went to the goal, management, management of management, and then application of the business. I don't know if that's right or wrong but it made sense in my head.

Lawrence: There is probably no right or wrong really with this kind of stuff. It's designed on how you wrote. We're talking about if you look at this like an accountability chart. If I could just describe out loud, it is like you've got these two guys, Stevie and Luca, who are general managers who are running the business. And then, obviously, the trainers reporting to them. Have you followed EOS style roles and responsibilities structured to your business? Is that what has influenced you there mostly?

Blair: Yeah. I love this point of conversation because EOS is amazing. I mean, all of these other books that we've read have been amazing. I sort of ended up not really on purpose taking little bits and pieces from everything so EOS is… Meetings for example I find are the absolute best because I hate the… I'm going to say it, maybe I shouldn't and you can edit it out. But the corporate masturbation associated with meetings is just absolutely atrocious. We just sit around for 55 to 95 minutes talking about the exact same topic and you

don't get anything done. Getting in and out with purpose and review and all of that kind of stuff is huge.

There's all these other influences too and you end up creating your own, and really whether that's good or that's bad is up for debate, but I pulled from a whole bunch of different resources for sure.

Lawrence: If we were to look at your accountability chart, you mentioned how you are administrative for the most part but you handle quite a few things. I'm assuming you handle HR and marketing as well, right? Is that all you basically?

Blair: Yeah. We talked about this a little bit when we switched over our platforms. I won't go too far that way. But the marketing we have brought in somebody I actually genuinely think you should talk to on this podcast because it would be super cool. They've done an amazing job setting some automations for us both internal and external.

Lawrence: Well, you weren't 100% comfortable doing that. That's great that you're now in a position where you're like, "You should talk to this person." [unclear] That's awesome.

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Blair: We are into it now I think for five months and just having the ability to snapshot and take a look at metrics is enormous. The thought of me setting that up… Now, to be honest with you I tried to set it up and I couldn't have done a better butchering job if I had tried. I don't think I could have screwed it up to the negative that I did if I was intending on screwing up. There are a bunch of other factors. But we transitioned out of Pike13 into Studio and we set up a Brandbot and the two of them worked together and in one click I can pull reports to see the health in that facility and that kind of stuff which is super, super cool. In terms of marketing, I do…

Blair: Just a quick interjection. This is an important point. If you're going to be a remote owner you have to have a dashboard whether that's a fancy report from a studio using a consultant to help set up, which we might talk about a bit later and do a separate podcast, or it's simply a scorecard using EOS. Again, for those who aren't familiar, the book Traction by Gino Wickman. There is also a 15-part series inside this Membership how you tailor that to a HIT business. What doesn't get better than that, right? Part of that is having the scorecard. A scorecard is just something you can look at because you are [unclear] business. If you are… What are the 5, 10, 15 things you want to know – revenue, sessions, number of free workouts, retention, who didn't show for the last two weeks, etc. So letting you resume there, having that pulse on the business is obviously key to see what's going on.

Blair: It's key. And you can't be afraid to have that key be negative at times. You're not going to look at your scorecard and say, "Hell, yeah, maybe 5% again for the 15th week in a row." You're going to look at it sometimes and the health of your facility is at 62 and you're going to go, "Okay, how did this happen?" Most of the time you're going to look in the mirror and go, "Shit! I did it again." I slacked off. These are my faults. I know how to fix it. I'm going to go do it again. And not everybody's story is an overarching line of positivity. You have to remember that because if you don't and you forget that every time you have a little dip in that line you get pissed off. But you have to look at the dips as an opportunity to back up, have another carrot and get back on the path. That's cool.

The marketing, I set up most of it. We're just lodging into a new [unclear] right now which is going to be pretty exciting. It's going to be a lot more internal in driving for referrals without asking for referrals. The other one you're asking about was marketing administrative. Is that the other one?

Lawrence: Hiring – HR.

Blair: HR is cool. This is another version of providing staff purpose and meaning within your facility that I accidentally created just because I have… Again, Lawrence, I'm the luckiest guy in the world. So lucky that I feel even guilty sometimes talking about what can be perceived as a successful outcome.

My wife is a recruiter. She is not in the fitness industry but she is very good at people, reading people, and doing all these things. I created a system of HR and hiring where she does all of our pre-screening which is incredible. The candidates if they pass her phone interviews go to our managers because they are the ones that are going to have to manage them and see them. I'm actually the last point of contact in the hiring process. I want everybody else's valued opinion before I even get to that person because I'm not the one that's going to be in the day to day trenches with them at this point. I used to be but I'm not. Yeah, I manage the HR and I built out the systems for the HR. But I'm really a cog in the HR wheel which is really cool.

Lawrence: So cool. One of the themes I'm hearing is, have you heard of the saying, "WHO not HOW"?

Blair: Yeah.

Lawrence: This focuses on surrounding ourselves with great people. I know you're attributing some of that to luck, and maybe there is a bit of luck, right? But I think you should also take your influence on the culture too and your, like you said, your rigorous hiring process probably helps select the right person. That's another thing like getting [unclear] about your hiring is key. Not hiring people just because you like them, right? That's cool having you the last person they see and really valuing the opinions and vetting of your team

which is really critical. I'm seeing a key theme here is you have to get the right people in place and have a focus on that to make this type of thing possible too. Remove yourself from the business and still continue to grow the business like you have.

Blair: Yeah, for sure. I also think recognizing that you might have the right people. This sounds maybe stupid but you don't necessarily need 50,000 Swiss Army knives. It's okay to have people that have certain strengths and don't have others. I'm not going to say weaknesses because this is a personal facing business. Like everybody has probably got an element of the same skill set but people are going to have different highlights and different lowlights.

I didn't have these plans necessarily when we hired Luca, when we hired Stevie. I have other amazing staff too. I'm not degrading the quality of the other people who work with us. But one day we were all just chatting and it dawned on us, "Okay, this is the time to move. We are going to do this." Rosemary and I, my wife, are in a pretty good situation right now to put together the things that I've been talking about needing to do to be able to do this. So let's go. You also have to recognize when you have the right opportunity too.

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Lawrence: Did you have any pushback from the team where they're like, "Oh, I'm going to miss you, Blair."?

Blair: I think I'd be lying if I say people didn't see it coming. We travel here all the time. Toronto for me is such a cool city. There's so many things to do. I had such a good time. But my interests lie pretty much outside of this city. And when I say interest I mean do recreationally. I'm not overly quiet about… I like what I like and people know that about me. I don't think it was a surprise to anybody that somebody who likes biking, water skiing, going outdoors, and being with his family is not overly interested in living in downtown Toronto. Two hours from his closest family member is in five hours from his son's cousins. I think people saw it coming. It is just when it happened that maybe it was a little bit of a shock.

But when I lay it out, when I talked to Ian about it, I think it was a little bit of a shock to him because of the time relative to COVID and where the business was and all that kind of stuff. But when I unrolled the carpet he was like, "Oh yeah. Okay, this makes sense. You need to do this. What do you need me to do?" I didn't come to the conversation with a, "I hate this place. Help me get out of here." It was, "The business looks good. I think it's going to work well as we continue to do this. Here is how we are going to do this without me and here is what I'm going to continue to do while I'm not physically here."

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Lawrence: Okay. For that context, Ian is one of the Co-owners of the business. Okay, cool. Alright. Yeah, I can see why he might have some concerns around that time.

Blair: Well, let's be honest. Ian and I together might be our longest relationships. I think Ian and I have been together… We've been married for a very long time. For me to sit down with Ian and go, "I'm leaving you. But it's not you, it's me.", was a little bit of a surprise. I mean, we met on such a good day that he was like, "Okay, sleeves are rolled. Let's do this. What do you mean?"

Lawrence: That last thing I remember saying to Ian is being at REC, being at breakfast with you, being quite hung over, and just really getting sick of the fact that I had the worst brain fog the whole time. This was REC 2019. Because they are doing jet lag, the alcohol, and everything. I just couldn't think clearly whilst I was there to be honest with you. I need to manage that better next time. I remember I was saying to Ian we were talking something about metabolism conversation, or insulin, or fat loss, or something that was on Joe Rogan. I said I was really interested and I started talking about it and Ian asked me a question. And I said, "You know what, I can't remember anything actually in terms of details." I just felt really dumb at that moment because I could see he was like, "Tell me more." I was like, "No, I actually can't really… My brain is not working right now." I'm sure he doesn't remember that moment but silly things like that stick with me. There you go.

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This is super cool, super interesting. Just for clarity there you're not seeing any clients now at all?

Blair: I'm not seeing any clients at MedX Precision Fitness in Toronto. I'm working at our facility here in Ottawa that just started. Man, it took a little bit longer than I thought. Initially when I made the call, we purchased the equipment, and all that kind of stuff. I was going to unload the equipment from the truck and it was going straight into my garage. I was doing a little bit of renovation and all that kind of stuff. And then I moved here in the basement and it was enormous and the thought of keeping my garage for things like cars, bikes, and not having to wipe the snow off and all that kind of stuff became attractive. It is cool. I mean, the whole thing is wonderful in the sense that I wasn't going to have to worry about heating an uninsulated space. But the downside was getting MedX equipment into the basement is the least amount of fun you could possibly think about it.

It took a little bit longer because I wasn't… I mean, I could do some of it by myself but I couldn't do all of it by myself so then I was waiting on people to come and help me. It probably really literally took six weeks longer to get everything up and running. I think I've sent you some photos.

Lawrence: Yeah, it looks beautiful. You had the High Intensity Business podcast on the screen. It's very flattering to see.

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Blair: It's good.

Lawrence: I love it. I mean, just for those, if Blair is comfortable we'll put a couple of photos in the Membership. You got to see it. Beautiful machine layout. This is in the basement of your house right now. Is that correct?

Blair: Yeah.

Lawrence: Okay.

Blair: We had this unused space that was built out in a weird way and had stinky carpet and all this kind of stuff so I just gutted the whole thing.

Lawrence: The skills you have to do all that stuff. Well, maybe I'm useless because I say I'm useless. It is like a mind-bar. I lack confidence in my abilities to do any of that stuff. And you're just like, "Yeah, I did this. I built that." Oh my god.

Blair: Have you ever done it?

Lawrence: I have built furniture a couple of times.

Blair: Are you talking about IKEA?

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Lawrence: I'm talking a little more challenging than IKEA but not by much. Actually, it's probably as easy as IKEA. That's the most complex case to me, Blair, to be honest with you. It's not my strength.

Blair: Well, if you don't do it, where the hell would you be good at? Cut yourself some slack.

Lawrence: I will.

Blair: Yeah.

Lawrence: But anyway, I'm very impressed by your workman skills.

Blair: Thank you.

Lawrence: You're basically starting another little MedX PF in your house, right. What's the situation there? What's the goal there? What are you trying to do?

Blair: Rental rates in Ontario for commercial spaces are a little bit, I mean, they are crazy. So the thought of me moving in cities, the unknown of kids starting daycare, and Rosemary working remote, and having to do some house renovations and all that kind of stuff just spook me from signing a lease. But I really like helping people and I also really enjoy training so the thought of

not having a facility to train at stressed me a little bit. Although Richard Chartrand is just down the road, 20 minutes, so I could go and train there. But I'm selfish. I like training when I want to train and maybe they couldn't fit it in.

The natural progression in me was just move it, [unclear] put it in your house, commit to a year and a half of training, make that grow, and if it grows into something, if it has a profit margin significant enough to have a brick and mortar then move it to a brick and mortar. Mitigate your risk and deal with, to be really honest with you, the strangeness of people coming to your house. It is a little bit weird but the space is beautiful, it's clean, it's very temperature, it's got amazing equipment. I mean, my smile can bring up any room. Let's be honest.

Lawrence: That's true facts.

Blair: It doesn't matter where it is. That was my whole stick for a year and a half, go hard, and see if you're going to make it into something that creates enough revenue to have a brick and mortar. But now that it's there I don't know if I don't want it there. It's the coolest thing ever.

Lawrence: It is so cool.

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Blair: Who knows what it would bring. We just started seeing people. I've got a pretty good network here. At the start I'm just really going on referrals.

Lawrence: How many clients have you got for that little space?

Blair: Now, I had a bunch of people cancel this week because they are sick. Illness is going around apparently. But next week I'll probably have 10 or 15 sessions.

Lawrence: How did you get all these guys? What did you do to drum it up?

Blair: My father-in-law, my in-laws and my parents. To be honest the thing was again luck. They are the most generous people on the planet. A couple of years ago I told Rob, Rosemary's dad, to read Body by Science. And then he started going to Andrew Shortt, trained with Andrew until Andre shut down. And then they started to go and see Richard Chartrand. My mother went to Richard Chartrand and they chatted with all their friends. I'm going to keep this location pretty specific. It's 55 and over, strength based, not too focused on people that are chasing hypertrophy. My whole thing is living better, longer, and increasing your strength so you can keep doing your things, and don't fall on cross country skiing, ride your bike, and all that kind of stuff. That's giving you my hard niche here versus MedX PF in Toronto which has

reduced its average age by 10 years in the last 12 months which is super cool.

Lawrence: Wow! That's amazing.

Blair: It's super cool. It's just because there are a little bit more pedestrians in there now. I'm going to rely heavily on referrals. I'm not going to really seek out too much external stuff for a couple of reasons. One it's at my house. Now we're very keen on some super, super strangers that saw an ad on Facebook rocking up. And two, MedX PF in Toronto, this is all new for me. While you may be asking questions that are loaded because you know I can answer them, there are still so many things that I just haven't encountered, we're still making it more efficient, and a couple of things we really suck out.

I can't soak up 40 hours a week seeing people in my basement and then neglect Luca and Stevie in the facility in Toronto. I'm just controlling my inflow. Right now I'm not. Like get in, I'm not busy enough to say that I'm controlling my inflow but I do have a cap of people that come here for sure.

Lawrence: Interestingly, the more you're reluctant to add people, the more referrals you'll get. It is the 'ah' of negotiation. The person who wants it least is going to get the best deal, right?

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Blair: Yeah.

Lawrence: It's funny how that works. Just a couple of other things here I wanted to talk to you about. That's cool, you got the other facility going on. I was thinking about what are the core things that go into scaling back and working on the business, seeing less clients. What else is there? I mean, you talked about systems. You talked about hiring the right people and managing those people appropriately. For everyone watching or listening, this is a very high level overview podcast. The key here is, if you want the same reality that Blair has, I think the next action is then look at the resources in this thread and then go to execute on each one individually. So whether that's creating a better culture, developing your trainers, or hiring better trainers or better team members, creating systems. I have it all listed there. What else comes to mind for you? Key things that you did that set you up for this, Blair, that we haven't yet touched on.

Blair: I recognize pretty strongly the things that I'm not good at. Maybe just like everybody else I know. We just talked about you only being able to build like IKEA furniture which is the perfect example of maybe I'm not…

Lawrence: I was going to cut that. No, I can't.

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Blair: I'm very good at recognizing things I'm not good at and maybe not that good at recognizing things that I'm good at. One of the things that I wasn't good at was setting up the automations for things like onboarding new people, setting up automations for asking for reviews. Name your x, y, and z. I can send a snapshot if you want to put this up in the thread on the website. Because we now have 25 or might be more different auto campaigns set up for client journeys for every single facet of interaction you could think of, starting with just filling out the form on our website to sign up for a newsletter. Somebody who visits our website and sets up a profile, what happens x, y, and z? Somebody hasn't been in for two weeks, what happens, x, y, and z from an email perspective, from a text message perspective. One of the biggest things I think was getting all of that set up. In order to have that set up because I tried on my own I do recognize that I was absolutely crap in the bed. And if you're crap in your bed it's something you think really will make a difference in your ability to execute other areas of your business and you can see how it will take you to the next step. Well, there is a cost associated with it, potentially how to make that affordable.

We are coming from a situation, COVID, where at the start of 2022 our revenues were 36% of what they were in 2019. Arguably, when we signed up with these consultants to set up these automations, maybe it wasn't the most affordable thing. So what sacrifices do we have to make to be able to do that? And then, it turns out that that was probably the single biggest thing

that helped me focus on the other stuff because it took an enormous amount off my plate. I'm lucky to be able to afford that, coming back to luck. But if you would ask me about consultants two and a half, three years ago I probably would have [unclear] at the idea of it because why not just do the work yourself. You've got time. It's your job. It's your business. Do the work. Don't spend the money. Save the money. But I think that's actually one of our biggest points of pride. I'm going to say points of pride. I'm proud that I made that decision because I was wasting time, which is money, on trying to set this crap on myself and just beating my head against the wall.

Lawrence: One other thing. This is what people have to realize is that it gives you speed. It gives you speed and it saves you opportunity cost.

Blair: Yeah.

Lawrence: This opportunity costs when you can't focus on your strengths. It's like myself. I'm good at sales. That is probably one of my strengths. I should mostly be doing that. If there's other stuff that I'm not good at it's really time consuming. I should pay someone else to do it. That's what I'll try and do. I think that was a wise decision you made there.

Blair: If I think about just playing to my strengths though it is so interesting because we don't have one strength. You don't have one strength. Sales

maybe is your #1 strength but you don't have one strength. Even with your weaknesses you can probably extract a little bit of efficiency out of it in some way, shape, or form. Say, this part of this weakness is actually very good and I'll just do this part of this weakness I'd be a happier human. If I was able to just do the thing that I think I'm the best at, all I would do all day long is intro sessions. I would spend an hour and ten minutes doing intro sessions and talking with the basics of why you should strength train all day. I'd be the happiest guy in the world. But then you trickle down to the bottom of the list and it's keeping track of who hasn't been in for 21 days and emailing them, and pestering them to get in even though they don't have an appointment. The second I see that my brain goes, "You don't want to do that." And it just turns off and ignores it. Setting up a system to cover your weakest strongpoints is I think super important.

Lawrence: Okay. Anything else that comes to mind? Core things you did to create this reality you have?

Blair: Accountability meetings are enormous. You have to trust all the people that you're managing in your facility when you're not there. Trust isn't necessarily an inherent thing so how do you generate that? You have to be clear with your objectives. You have to be fair with your reactions. You have to be forthright with your expectations and then you have to be incredibly available for discussions. You have kids. Kids get sick. I'm 5 hours away. I've had to

reschedule trips into Toronto an infinite number of times. But nothing takes away from the fact that these guys know that if they need to know where a Kleenex is they can call me without feeling like they are pissing me off or I've got a timeline or anything like that. Most of the time now it's a text, "Blair, we are out of garbage bags. Can you Amazon some more?" You have to make it known that instantly right away there is accountability on both sides. It's not just me putting you accountable. I am absolutely readily available at any point in time and there's going to be little screw ups on both sides obviously for sure. We meet regularly. They meet with the staff regularly with clear expectations as clear as we possibly can. That's usually important too. It's a two-way street.

Lawrence: Yeah, that's awesome. Thank you for that. Just to summarize a couple of things you said. I wanted to talk about systems. I don't want people to get intimidated by systems. If you don't mind me saying, I don't think people need to have all the systems you said.

Blair: No.

Lawrence: It's a lot of systems there. If anyone is curious, we've been talking about Alex Hormozi a fair bit. He is a phenomenal guy that I followed on YouTube I think personally. I think he is right when he says just do the boring work. Not to say training is boring but I think people think there is some secret out there.

It is like making sales calls, training people really well, asking for referrals. A lot of the time just focusing on the boring work and doing that repetitively consistently over a year is going to get you to grow and grow the business significantly. But where I am going with this is with systems. I think the mindset is sometimes if you know you're going to do something more than once, like you're going to acquire a new customer and then onboard them with an email sequence, how can you do that once and then never again? Done once is the mindset. Anything repetitive that you know you're going to need to do over and over again. And that could become, for instance, the first email sequence.

I'm also thinking I know there's members who maybe don't even have email management software. In fact, most probably don't. I'm really trying to take these baby steps but get something like an active campaign. Is it all in one with you? Studio has an email management built in or do you have a separate email or something?

Blair: One of the reasons why we switched is that Studio is owned by the same company that owns something called Brandbot and they are perfectly integrated. We [unclear] money month to month with our subscription because they have merged but they actually… I have Pike13 integrating with Brandbot and it was good. But it was great to Studio to Brandbot. It's perfectly seamless.

But then I want to add as we're chatting and I think if we were to… If you were to ask me the question again seven times or seven different occasions I might come up with seven different answers. But I think if you're intimidated by the amount of systems you could possibly create and you hypothetically don't have the email management software, I think the most important initial things you could possibly systematize are your introductory workouts and the first 10 sessions for new clients. If you can teach that, if you can write those down, that means you can teach them and you can implement them with other people and you could manage the expectations around it. Don't think about campaigns and all that kind of stuff. Think about the gears of your business first.

Lawrence: I love that. Keep it simple. Start on those two things. The way that looks to people who are listening thinking, "Okay. How do we do that?" Well, look at how you do a free workout or look at the highest converting person in your team. If that's yourself then typically it's the founder, right, in most cases. Look at how you're doing it and then you write down how you do it in bullets and simplify it as much as you can. Teach it to someone else. Have them follow. Have them actually do some real free workouts and then evaluate. Although I don't know how. Do you evaluate your team? Do you offer free workouts or intro sessions I should say because I know you charge for it now? Don't you, Blair?

Blair: Yeah, we charge. I think everybody should charge. That's a totally different podcast. Now we shadow each other. We have scorecards for each other. And we schedule x, y, z, number of these depending on the person or how busy they are per month. We talk about the outcomes those 2 days after the review is done and I can send you the sheet if that would be helpful. But then we also have an email campaign automatically to get sent out after the first 5 sessions, 14 sessions, and forward 25th session. We are constantly asking for feedback in an anonymous fashion. To review obviously [unclear] that's not going to be anonymous. But we are constantly in many ways asking for anonymous feedback.

Lawrence: That's a key part of systems is trust but verify. Trust that your team is going to execute on the system you create but then have a mechanism in place to check anyway which is exactly what you're doing there. Especially that's so critical for you because you're not there. You're not in the studio. You can't see things. You need other ways in order to get that information so automating it for email feedback or another way is… Do you use Net Promoter Score?

Blair: We use a version of NPS and our NPS is a little bit skewed because it's attached to the one that isn't anonymous. We can see who you are. By the time you're 25 sessions in, you've seen Luca 25 times. You probably really like Luca. There is no way you're going to give Luca some bad information.

By the time you get to the 25th session you are probably giving us a 4 or 5. I think it's a little bit falsified and I don't know how else to do it. But the one thing I think is super interesting is the fact that I sit here in my facility or I sit on my desk while Luca and Stevie are absolutely crushing the management of the ship. To me success is numbers. I look at percentage utilization, number of sessions a week, number of dollars coming to the bank account, and then I go and tell them they do a good job or a bad job. But for them the measure of success is completely human interaction. They are two totally different cogs and how do you integrate? They are looking at the cleanliness of the facility and how good Gab is at giving introductory sessions or the number of people that haven't made it in this week versus last week and all that kind of stuff. And they are physical things and I'm literally just looking at numbers. And then we have to try to figure out a common language between those two things to keep the business going. It's really, really cool.

Lawrence: We need to do EOS as our finish here because I know we're on time. Do you do the 5-minute step which is customer employee headlines? Do you do that step? Because that does bring to life the numbers for you. "Oh, Janice injured her ankle. She wouldn't be in for a few…" It's stuff like that, right?

Blair: Yeah. That sucks because you can talk a little bit about your highlights in those meetings too. That way there is typically a portion of the meeting that if you're doing it right is probably focusing on negatives. You have to really

set it in like we didn't do as many things last month. This is down. That's freaking hard especially when you are trying to make a whole bunch of people happy, your staff. Well, you're growing. You don't want to be too negative but you can't all just be positive. You have to look at these things and you know how to fix them. I know you want to kick me off and I talk too much. But the one thing that I've found, the system that I've found that's super, super cool, again, we are so lucky to have this system. We talk a little bit forward. We have an Inbody and we have a Vibe. We strength test everybody when they come in. And in the first week of every quarter we call it test week. Everybody tests both on the Vibe and in the InBody in the same workout. And then we have three different communal workouts if you can pick when you walk in the door and they are designed to be absolutely brutal and take anywhere from 10-15 minutes. You can do the test and get a good workout and communicate things.

Lawrence: Love it.

Blair: The one thing that we have made out of this that we didn't mean to make it out of, and we talked about systems and having a measure or a point to build a measure to success of that system, the past week is more stressful for the trainers than it is for the client. Because if the trainer has done their job within the scientific context of the trainee there should be a good outcome. And if there is a bad outcome, the first thing the trainer at MedX PF knows

to do is go get our prescribed, the right things over the last 12 weeks. Yes, clients can sandbag. They can get hurt. They can have a bad day on test day. They can do whatever the hell they want to do outside of the facility and you can't stop them. But ultimately, the trend is the responsibility of the trainer. All of our systems from an execution standpoint are tested once a quarter and it is super cool. As a trainee at MedX PF you would have never thought that we think like that but we are more scared at test week than you are. If you have a bad result we have to tell you why and what happened. And more likely than not we are going to sit down and go, "We didn't program this properly. Let's get after it this month." Super cool. So that's another system that you think about.

Lawrence: I love that. I'm going to shoot myself because I'm going to pick up the kids from [unclear] Blair, I'm so grateful. Just to wrap up on this one. If you want to find out more about MedX Precision Fitness, it is medxpf.com. Is that correct still?

Blair: Yeah. If you're in Manotick here in Ottawa, it's manotickpersonaltrainer.com. You have to put a plug in there. Then MedX PF is already set in. I don't know if [unclear] still manages the Facebook page.

Lawrence: Anything that you think is relevant today? Just anyone added to the thread. You can just ping me a text or whatever email and I'll get it in there. Or you

can just post yourself, Blair, if you want to add anything that I missed. Thanks again for doing this mate. I'm very grateful and really fascinated learning about what you're doing. What you've achieved is really inspiring.

Thank you everyone for being a member. Please let me know your biggest challenges to help inform future training. That's what informed this one. I know this is something that people often think about and talk about or even post in the Membership. You can all post in the Membership or email me lawrence@highintensitybusiness.com. It's all good. Thanks again. And thank you, Blair. I'll talk to you soon mate. I really appreciate it.

Blair: Thanks for having me pal.

Lawrence: Aright. Take care. Bye bye.