

Small But Mighty Agency Podcast

Episode 130: Why Growing Your Agency Alone is a Recipe for Stagnation

Speakers: Audrey Joy Kwan

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If you're an agency owner who's doing good work, delivering results and building with intention, but growth still feels heavier than it should, this episode is for you because, sometimes the bottleneck isn't your offer, your effort, or your systems. It's the fact that you're building in a kind of isolation. Not because you don't have people around you, like clients, maybe a team, maybe a community, but because you're missing the kind of relationships to help you reflect, recalibrate and grow. There's a reason this feels hard, and you can't read the label from inside the bottle. And if you've been sensing that friction, that stuckness, this episode will help you name what's behind it and what changes when you stop building alone. Small agencies weren't meant to grow in isolation. Let's talk about why.

Audrey Joy Kwan

Welcome to the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you want to grow an agency to seven figures and beyond without working more hours in your business, you're in the right place. I'm your host, Audrey Joy Kwan. I know what it takes to build an agency, including supporting an agency owner in selling and exiting. I also have a master's degree in communications, specializing in organizational development. My team and I have worked behind the scenes of multiple seven figure agencies and have coached and consulted with over 150 agency owners. All this to say, when you join us on the small but mighty agency podcast, you get real world experience and practical tips that help you work less, earn more, and lead with integrity. So let's go.

Audrey Joy Kwan

Welcome back to the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you're new here, welcome. This show is for agency owners who are building differently. Because small but mighty doesn't mean small goals, small revenue or small ambition. It means you've chosen trust over tactics, clarity over chaos, collaboration over, competition. Now, you run lean on purpose, and you scale with strategy. And you

care less about being everywhere and more about being known for the right things by the right people. If that sounds like you, you're in the right place.

In today's episode, I want to talk about something that feels kind of small, but shapes everything. See, agencies don't grow alone. And you shouldn't either. Now, that might sound obvious, but let's get real. A lot of agency owners are still trying to do it all themselves. The client work, the team, the sales, the visibility, the system and all trying to hold the vision and push for growth. Usually in isolation. And it's easy to think if I just work harder or figure out that one missing piece, this will all get easier. But I've seen over and over again going solo is the slowest and hardest way to grow. Let me paint a picture. Over the past few years, I've worked with agencies at every stage. From just crossing that 250k mark to scaling past a million. And across the board, the ones growing most sustainably weren't the loudest. They weren't the ones posting every day or chasing the next sales tactic. They were the ones who had strategic relationships around them. People who got their business, who referred clients, who co created offers, who gave honest feedback, and who shared the win. They had partners, and not just people. And that's where Agency Together started.

You know, when I created Agency Together, it wasn't because the world needed another networking group. It was because I saw five specific challenges that agency owners, especially the small but mighty ones, were facing. And these challenges weren't just slowing down growth. They were keeping great agencies and great founders invisible. So here's the real why behind Agency Together, layer by layer.

Number one, isolation is a growth bottleneck. Let's start with the obvious but rarely addressed: Agency ownership is isolating. When you're in the weeds with client work, delivering and managing a team, or maybe you're doing all of that yourself, it's easy to convince yourself that you just need to push through. But that's far from the truth. Going solo is the slowest way to grow. When you're isolated, you're not seeing what's possible. You miss better ways to lead, serve and scale because you're not learning from others. And you end up repeating mistakes someone else already figured out how to avoid. That's the first reason Agency Together exists. It's to give agency owners a place to learn faster, make fewer mistakes and see more

possibilities. Because you're learning with others, not just from your own trial and error.

Number two, the agency world can feel dog eat dog. And it doesn't have to. The second reason Agency Together exists is something I noticed more and more in conversations with agency owners. Especially when the economy is shifting or AI is changing how we work, this quiet fear starts to creep in and the devil on the shoulder is whispering. If someone else wins a client, does that mean I've lost one? That kind of zero sum thinking, it's exhausting. And frankly, it's not even true. Some of the most powerful agency growth I've seen hasn't come from protecting turf. It's come from collaboration. When agencies serve different niches, there's room for everyone to grow. And that's why Agency Together is curated. We build cohorts of noncompeting agencies. So instead of guarding doors, you're opening them for each other. So, there's no weird pitch energy, no overlap, just aligned strategic shared growth.

Number three, it's because AI is accelerating distrust and human relationships are an antidote.

Let's talk about the thing we're all navigating: AI. Yes, it's impressive, yes, it's efficient and yes, it's changing how we work. But it's also creating more content and more noise. And with that comes more skepticism from buyers. Clients are asking, do I really need an agency for this? Is this human or AI? Who can I actually trust? Now, AI can automate a process, but it can't build a reputation. It can't co create with nuance, it can't read the room and it can't facilitate trust across a table. And that's where Agency Together steps in as a human first trust driven network. A place to build the kind of credibility and collaboration that AI simply can't replicate.

Number four: great work isn't enough anymore. You need collaboration to be seen and to build trust. Let me say it straight. Great work alone won't get you visibility. In today's market even the best agencies get overlooked. Not because they aren't talented, but because no one's helping them to be seen. And if you're nodding along right now, I actually go deeper into this in another episode. It's called Why Less Experience is Winning at Higher Prices. If you haven't listened to it yet, definitely give it a spin after this one. In that episode, I break down why great work isn't enough

anymore and what's actually driving agency selection in today's skeptical high stakes market. We talk about why the agency with the best portfolio doesn't always win. How trust equity is replacing credentials as the number one selection factor and what's fueling that should and how to build trust before you pitch, because trust isn't passive, it's choreographed. So, if this piece is resonating, circle back to that episode, I go into a lot more detail there. The link is in the show notes.

But here's the core of what I want to leave you with: Visibility and trust don't just happen. They're built intentionally and with others and inside Agency Together, we make that happen by collaborating. We support each other's visibility, we pass the mic, and we open the door.

Okay, number five, the fifth reason why Agency Together exists, it's because leadership doesn't happen in isolation. You become a better leader when you're surrounded by people doing the work, sharing what's working, what's not, and how they're navigating change. Yes, you might own the agency. You might be leading the team. But without a trusted circle to learn from, reflect with, and be challenged by, it's really easy to get stuck. Stuck leading the way you've always led. Stuck thinking you're the only one facing these challenges and stuck trying to grow while second guessing every move. What I've seen inside Agency Together is something different. You're not alone in the hard calls. You learn how others are navigating complexity, and you get language for things you've been sensing but couldn't quite name. You build a confidence not just from experience, but from connection. Because leadership isn't about having all the answers. It's about growing in the right room.

Now, let's talk about you for a second. If you're listening to this, I already know a few things about you. You're not building a bloated machine. You're building a sharp, strategic agency that clients trust. You care about doing great work and getting great results. But you're tired of doing it alone. You're generous, thoughtful, and strategic, and you wish more people in your world operate the same way. Sound about right? Then Agency Together was built for you. It's a curated network of small but mighty agencies who believe in the power of collaboration over competition. Who believe that you can grow a thriving, profitable, visible business without trying to be everything to everyone. This isn't a place where you hope for strategic connections.

This is where you build the relationships that make them inevitable. You show up, you get to know people, you follow up intentionally, and you create growth together. If anything in this episode resonated with you, if you're done building in a vacuum, if you're ready to connect with other agency owners who want to build strategically just like you, join us for the next Agency Together mixer. It's free to attend. It's not a webinar; it's not a sales pitch. It's a curated, intentional room of agency owners building businesses rooted in trust and collaboration who are there to connect and collaborate. And honestly, some of the best partnerships in the Agency Together started at our mixer.

So, if you're ready to stop growing alone and start growing together, head to agencytogether.com/mixer and grab your spot. And that link will also be in the show notes. I hope to see you there. And until next time, remember, small but mighty agencies aren't a limitation. They're an advantage and you don't have to go alone. I'll see you on the next one.. I'll see you on the next one.

Audrey Joy Kwan

Hey, thanks for hanging out with me at the small but mighty agency podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean the world to me if you hit the follow or subscribe button in your podcast app and share it with a friend. I'll see you on the next one.