

Are You Derailing Your Business with Details?

Details can kill your web business. And I'm not talking about details killing your business from the standpoint of being careless about them. While it's true that being careless can hurt your business, everybody knows that (even if they don't always put it into practice). The way I'm talking about that details can kill your business is if you focus too much on them. Say what? How on earth can focusing too much on details hurt your business? Ever tried to walk on a railroad track? When I was a kid, my aunt and uncle had a house right next to a railroad track. My uncle once challenged me to walk on the track without falling off. Hey, it's not like walking a tightrope. That track was as wide as my feet. Should be no problem. So I started walking it, carefully watching my feet with each step to make sure I stayed on the track. But I couldn't get more than a couple of steps before I'd lose my balance and fall off. My uncle taught me that the only way to walk that track successfully was to look at a point a ways down the track – not down at my feet. By setting a goal and focusing on it, I could walk on that track as easily as if I was walking right on the ground. It was only when I focused on my feet that I tripped up. It works that way with business, too. Our natural reaction is to put all our attention into "watching our feet" as we deal with this short-term detail and that. But when we do that, we "fall off the track" of where we wanted to go. Now, I'm not saying that we should ignore the details of our business as we gaze wistfully toward our vision of the knock-out business we dream [Michael Lienert](#) of building. You never get anywhere without taking step after step after step to reach your goal. But you never get anywhere, either, if all you look at is the present step. The point in the distance that you need to focus on is the need your audience has and the solution you have that will fill it. It requires you to understand your audience – who they are and what they need and what concerns stand in the way of them choosing your solution. It's way too easy for us to focus on details, namely, on the latest traffic building tips or tools, the latest bells and whistles we can add to our site. Details are usually driven by facts, and facts are something we feel we can learn and control. Understanding the people who make up our pool of potential customers is a lot more scary. It requires us to step outside ourselves into the hearts and minds of other people. Given the choice between dealing with predictable facts and details or dealing with unpredictable human nature, most of us will jump at dealing with facts any time. But that just gets us stuck staring at our own feet as our feet inexplicably slip off the track. The only way to stay on track is by looking toward your ultimate goal: you helping people solve some problem in return for them repaying you fairly for the time and effort you put into it. That's really the most simple definition of what business is. The details are not your business. The facts and the tips and the tools are not your business either. They're merely the steps you take to get to that point in the distance. And the more you take that to heart, the more easily you'll stay on the track toward your goal.

