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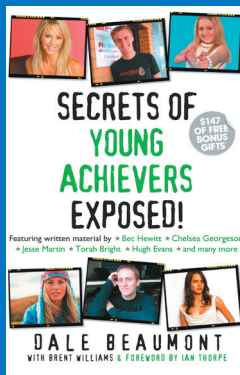
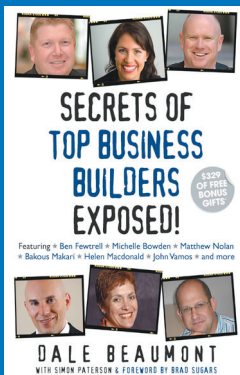
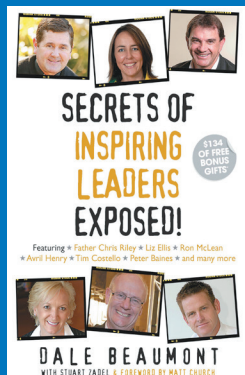
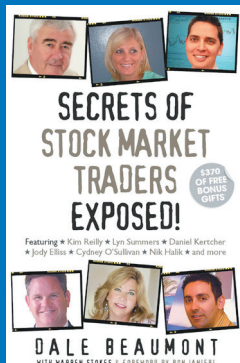
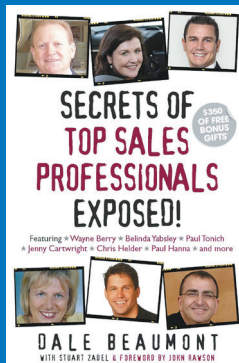
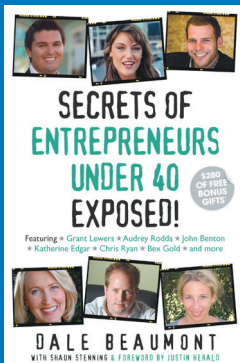
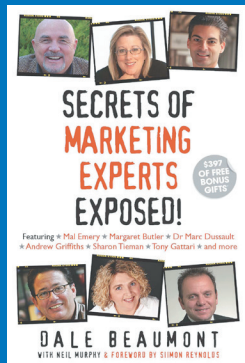
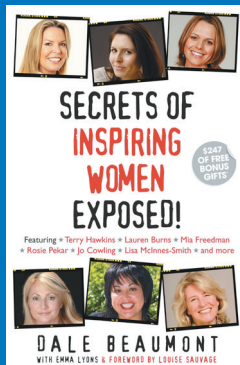
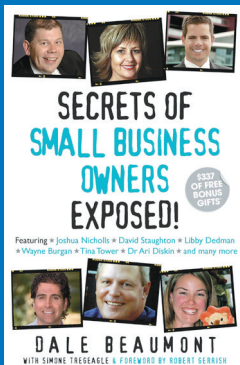
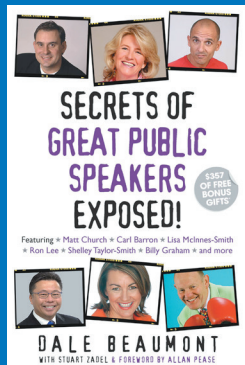
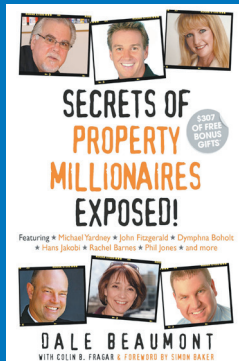
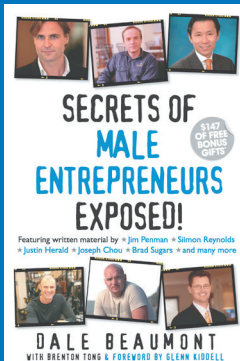
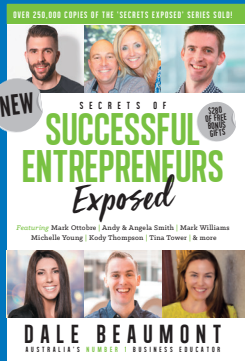
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"This is a must-read for any aspiring entrepreneur. The real-life stories are presented in a simple to read format that is both inspirational and educational."

TERENCE YOUNG – *Director of Surprise In A Box Pty Ltd*

"I can't help but think how many years of 'trial and error' I've saved by reading this book. It is informative, insightful and inspirational. Everyone should make this part of their library."

AARON ARTERY – *Business Owner*

"I absolutely love your book series because it is very informative, with lots of different perspectives and ideas. I found it extremely interesting, entertaining and everyone's different personalities came through and showed me that there is not just one way of going about being successful. This is one of the best books that I have read and continue to reread still."

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GEMMA BOUFFLER – *Aspiring Business Woman*

"This is an excellent series of books. The most interesting part was reading about the values of the contributors and how much of an impact these have on their success and the success of their businesses. There is hope for the 'good guys'."

NIK CREE – *Gandalf Group*

“Having read a lot of books within the genre, the ‘Secrets Exposed’ series has really opened my eyes when it comes to business concepts and ideas that I never would have thought of. They are a fantastic resource.”

SAM BAILEY – *Small Business Owner*

“To me, the best thing about the ‘Secrets Exposed’ series is the insight it gives into the backgrounds and journeys of the people profiled, which when combined, gave me a powerful reference for my own life and success.”

ROB SCOTT – *Aspiring Entrepreneur*

“A riveting series of books that I am in awe of, I am ecstatic about them; they have turned me into a bookworm. They will show you how everyday people just like you and I can and do achieve amazing things. If inspiration and motivation is what you are seeking, then you may have just found what is needed to take you to the next level in your journey.”

SHARON BARLOW – *Bouncing Bodz Pty Ltd*

“In these books, I loved the real life experiences that successful people had to endure in order to achieve true success. It shows those of us who are younger, or those just starting out, that there will be many obstacles to overcome, but you can still do it. It’s a true account of success which alerts us to the failures one can avoid.”

ASH HARAN – *Business Entrepreneur*

“The ‘Secrets Exposed’ series offers a great opportunity for readers to hear from those who have already achieved business success. They give real life accounts which can be influential in making success happen for you.”

FRANK PATRICKS – *Hospitality Executive*

“I love these ‘Secrets Exposed’ books and have bought all of them. The stories are very inspiring and have helped me to take my business to another level. Everyone must read them, today, more than ever, because we need to be living our dreams. Congratulations on a great series.”

MARIE VARNIER-GITTARD – *Investor and Business Owner*

“Because of the ‘Secrets Exposed’ series, I have been able to make changes in my life. I have realised that until now no one believed in me so therefore I did not believe in what I can achieve, however, I do now! I have learnt so much from the contributors, which has helped me to determine where my life is going and how I am going to get there.”

TRACEY THOMPSON – *Account Manager*

“If there was one word to describe this series of books, it would be ‘real’. There are a lot of books out there that claim to tell real stories by real people, however, often they are misleading. These books provide numerous perspectives and answers to a number of different questions, and I can guarantee you will learn at least one thing from each chapter.”

ALICE HOYLE – *Beauty Therapist*

“We’ve all heard the saying, ‘Surround yourself with successful people’. A big thank you to Dale and the ‘Secrets Exposed’ team for doing all the legwork and interviewing these successful entrepreneurs. The ‘Secrets Exposed’ series has given me the opportunity to surround myself with these winners at my own pace, in my own time.”

TC LAM – *Strategic Investment Consultant*

“These ‘Secrets Exposed’ books have truly had an impact on my business and personal life since reading them. I found the format so easy to follow, and I learnt something new from every contributor. I have recommended these books to many of my friends and I am looking forward to future titles as I believe they will all hold secrets that will benefit me.”

SOPHIE KELSEY – *Budding businesswoman*

“I have read all of the current ‘Secrets Exposed’ series, and can’t wait for the next editions. I find these books inspiring and insightful. Dale has created something unique with all the wonderful ‘added value’ gifts throughout the books, which I have enjoyed receiving and benefiting from.”

LEE CLARK – *Customer Love*

“The ‘Secrets Exposed’ series has become my bible. A secret Rolodex to all the most successful business minds. To be connected instantly to people who are doing and have done what you dream and strive to become is uplifting, inspiring and insightful.”

TANIA MENZIES – *Jelli Beanz International Nannies*

“The ‘Secrets Exposed’ series has been instrumental in allowing me to make a major mental shift about my business and sales. Each chapter is a separate inspiration and a clear reminder of the simple, daily action and persistence required to achieve business success.”

NICOLE SEAGREN – *VISION Finance Australia*

“These ‘Secrets Exposed’ books have taught me a lot more than I learnt during my studies. The practical information and tips have opened my eyes to new ways of doing things. In addition to the books, receiving the free downloads was like continuing that education. I am amazed at how much I have learnt!”

BROOK YORK – *Professional Athlete*

“This book captures the essence of what the entrepreneurial spirit is all about. Plus, it doesn’t just tell you what to do – it shows you through example, providing the motivation you need to take action.”

LOUISE LOVEDAY – *National Sales Manager*

“As a former owner of a failed business, I found this book very practical and simple to understand. Thanks to this book, I know exactly what I’ll be doing differently next time.”

PAUL MATULIN – *Audio Visual Technician*

“I am totally in awe of what Dale has done to bring this book together. What I like most is that it really shows the human side of all the individual entrepreneurs and what, precisely, drove them to such great heights.”

BRENT WILLIAMS – *Managing Director, Tomorrow’s Youth International*

S E C R E T S O F
**BUSINESS
EXPERTS**
Exposed

D A L E B E A U M O N T

Disclaimer

All the information, techniques, skills and concepts contained within this publication are of the nature of general comment only, and are not in any way recommended as individual advice. The intent is to offer a variety of information to provide a wider range of choices now and in the future, recognising that we all have widely diverse circumstances and viewpoints. Should any reader choose to make use of the information contained herein, this is their decision, and the contributors (and their companies), authors and publishers do not assume any responsibilities whatsoever under any conditions or circumstances. It is recommended that the reader obtain their own independent advice.

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PREFACE

It's with huge pleasure and excitement that I'm now typing the preface for the next generation of 'Secrets Exposed' books.

If you're unaware of what has gone before, between 2005 and 2007, my team and I produced and published 15 books, which collectively sold over a quarter of a million copies.

Under the name 'Secrets Exposed', the series was designed to take people up close and personal with highly successful entrepreneurs in a range of different areas of business. In total, I interviewed 240 achievers and made their knowledge available to everyone.

The series was a hit and over the next few years, I received hundreds of letters and emails from people saying how much the 'Secrets Exposed' series changed their life. Several said it was the catalyst to start a business, invest in property, become a professional speaker or step up to a major leadership position.

A lot has changed since then. The GFC, smartphones, the subsequent app revolution, social media, digital marketing, e-commerce, ubiquitous WiFi and wearable technology were all either yet to be or were a speck compared to what they would become.

Ten years after my first book series was published, I am delighted to bring back 'Secrets Exposed', with the aim of inspiring the next generation of achievers.

While a lot has changed, some things remain the same. What hasn't changed is the reason I decided to create the series in the first place. This stems right back to my childhood.

My journey started at the age of six, when my mum enrolled me in gymnastics. Over the next twelve years, while conquering many physical skills, I also came to understand many of the success principles that are still with me today. I realised early that you don't get far without hard work, discipline, goal setting, delayed gratification and constant self-motivation.

Of all the skills I learned, the one that stuck with me the most was the value of having a coach.

You see, there are two ways to do anything in life. One is to do it on your own — we'll call that trial and error. The other is to learn from those who have gone before you — we'll call that following a recipe.

Using the example of sport, it's basically mandatory to have a coach and it's really the only way to reach the top. This is why you'll always see a coach on the sideline when you watch a major athletic or team sports event.

When I finished my gymnastic career at the age of 18, my first thought was to find coaches for the next phase of my life. With a thirst for knowledge, I began attending courses, workshops and seminars hosted by highly successful people who were excited to share their learnings. Doing this enabled me to compress decades of someone else's experience into just a few days.

In addition, I also started contacting successful people who weren't running courses or giving seminars. I would call anyone who inspired me on the phone and say, "Hi, my name is Dale. You don't know me, but I have just read an article about you in XYZ magazine. I really admire and respect what you have achieved and I was wondering if

I can take you out to lunch. I will meet you anytime and any place, can I please have 30 mins of your time?" If they accepted, I used that time to interview them about their experiences.

This led me to meet and learn from dozens of amazing people and as a result, it helped me to make over a million dollars before the age of 25.

I share this not so you can be impressed, but so you can understand my point. That is, whatever you want in life, whatever you are shooting for, chances are someone else has already done it, or at least something similar. They've already invested years of their life and probably hundreds of thousands of dollars, they've made lots of mistakes, learned from them and eventually succeeded.

The way I see it, why would you want to waste your own time, money and effort through trial and error, when you can fast-track your success by following someone's recipe? As Sir Isaac Newton said, "If I have seen further it is because I have been standing on the shoulders of giants."

Following someone's recipe won't prevent you from making a few mistakes of your own, far from it. What it will do is help you make more calculated and purposeful decisions, rather than big, misguided and ignorant ones.

Back to the story. After conducting my interviews, I realised the advice I was gathering could be and should be helping thousands of people. I requested permission to start sharing the answers of the professionals I had spoken to with others and the rest, as they say, is history.

Before you get started reading, I'd like to briefly share with you the process we go through and explain how to get the most out of reading this book.

Once we have decided on a topic, we find between 12 and 16 business owners. Each time, our aim is to provide a balance between well-known and lesser-known experts. This way, you get to discover the stories of people you might never hear of otherwise.

From there, we research their achievements and write no less than 30 specific questions. Having tried several formats, we have found written answers to be the best. Sure we could just record an audio interview. However, our experience has shown that unconsidered, off the cuff responses aren't as potent as written ones. Yes, it's more time consuming on both sides, but the heightened quality of considered answers make it worth the effort.

The rest of the production is details, but we want you to know and appreciate that hundreds of hours of time have been put into producing this book. When you consider that it's now yours for the cost of an inexpensive dinner, it really puts things into perspective.

Now, while we have made it as easy for you as possible to access the stories and advice of over a dozen high achievers, you do need to do some work at your end.

You see, if you sit there and read this book like a novel, it will be nothing but an enjoyable form of entertainment. However, if you want to maximise your learning and, in turn, your future success, you need to read as though you are a student. I suggest you read with a highlighter, write what you learn in the margins, share what you learn with others and, most importantly, decide how and when you can apply what you learn.

Think of this as a textbook, kick-starting your future success!

I want to thank my wife, Katherine, for supporting me with both the original and now this new series. To Emma Chase, who has worked for me for the last twelve years, and has pulled everything together.

Finally, I'd like to thank my many mentors, supporters and friends. Without them, this book would not have been possible.

That's it from me. Now, it's time for you to discover for yourself the wonderful wisdom contained in these pages. I know you will apply what you learn and turn your dreams into reality.

Your friend in success,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Beaumont". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'D' and a flourish at the end.

Dale Beaumont
Creator of the 'Secrets Exposed' Series
Sydney, Australia

PS. If you ever want to share with me your story or your feedback, you can reach me here:

<http://dalebeaumont.com/contact>

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations for picking up a copy of this book and making the wise choice to read the introduction. Why? Because most people don't.

Most decide to start or grow a business and then start building, jumping straight in without seeking advice or counsel.

Sadly, this often leads to failure. In the case of business, failure rates can be as high as 50 per cent within the first 12 months and close to 90 per cent within the first five years.

While part of me admires the courage and 'just do it attitude' of business owners who are starting out on their own, you can't help but think of the time and money lost. It is also frustrating to know how many mistakes could easily be avoided.

There is a time to act, but there is also a time to stop and to learn. Once you have educated yourself and uncovered the best plan of attack, you can implement that plan with your full effort and commitment, knowing there is a much higher chance of success.

If you are about to start a new business or project, you are most certainly in the right place. However, even if you have been in business for a long time (17 years for me), taking the time to learn is exactly what you should still be doing.

To reiterate this point, I'd like to share a saying from one of my mentors. The saying is, "In business, you rise to your level of incompetence." Just take a moment to think about what that really means!

For me it means, you can only go so far on your own. You only grow so much because you are limited by your own knowledge and skills.

You might be lucky. You might avoid the statistics and buck the trends. You might grow your business for years, but there will come a point when you run out of ideas. Eventually, you will have exhausted your skills and your growth, and success will stop.

Some call this your ceiling, some call this your plateau and others, like my mentor, your 'level of incompetence'. Can you breakthrough yourself? Technically no, because if you could have done it on your own, you would have already.

What's the solution? To enlist the help of some outside thinking! This should come from coaches and consultants who have more knowledge, more skills, more experience and more success than you.

When it comes to business coaches, it is important to choose the right one for you and your business. I believe the best strategy is to get to know and learn from as many coaches as possible.

You see, each business coach has their area of specialisation. In most cases, they have done their 10,000 hours and achieved something called mastery.

This is what makes 'Secrets of Business Experts Exposed' unique. In this book, you get access to information from no less than 13 master business coaches, each with their own set of skills.

These experts will cover; marketing, sales, customer experience, website conversion, social media, values and culture, leadership, cash flow management, franchising, personal productivity, retail selling, global expansion, legal matters, work-life balance and more.

Over the next few days or weeks, take the time to read each chapter. Some will directly relate to your business right now. You will be able to take ideas and implement them into your business for immediate results.

Other chapters will still be important but perhaps less relevant to you right now. However, don't gloss over them too quickly. Make notes so you can come back to their work in the future. There will come a time when the information is precisely what you need.

Before I wrap up, I'd like to say how excited I am for you. Usually, to get time with these experts and access their knowledge, you would expect to pay hundreds or even thousands of dollars per hour.

Right now, their insights are here for you, ready and waiting, all in one place. All you need to do is keep reading and make notes.

To further assist you in your business endeavours, a number of our experts have generously offered valuable gifts to all of our readers. To receive them, all you need to do is visit the specified website and follow the steps to download the bonus gifts — absolutely free.

At the end of this book, we have included the websites of every expert. This is to encourage you to reach out to them directly, should you require their help or support with your business.

Remember, it's what you do after you have finished reading that is going to determine its real value to you. So go out there, apply what you've learnt and when you reach a goal — no matter how big or small — let us know so we can share your success story.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Beaumont". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the final 't'.

Dale Beaumont

HELPFUL MARKETING



TIM REID

“ A great exercise is to list all the conventions in your industry in one column. In another column, write down what the complete opposite of each convention is. What you'll uncover is the opportunity to do things differently, get noticed for all the right reasons. ”

Tim Reid

TIM REID

Tim is the founder and host of Australia's #1 business marketing podcast — *The Small Business Big Marketing Show*, which can also be found on all Virgin Australia domestic and international flights.

During his early career, Tim was the marketing manager for Flight Centre. He also spent ten years working in Australia's largest advertising agency, looking after the advertising needs of brands such as Gillette, AXA, Yellow Pages and Dulux. In his early days as a marketer, Tim was instrumental in helping AFL legend Jim Stynes raise one million dollars for his youth charity, Reach.

Now a successful small business owner in his own right, each week Tim shares marketing insights and tips to help build small businesses into the empires they deserve to be. Having launched nine years ago, *The Small Business Big Marketing Show* has well over 400 episodes and three million downloads. It regularly ranks in iTunes above *The Tim Ferris Show*, *Seth Godin's StartUp School* and even the *Harvard Business School's show*.

Tim has built a global audience of motivated business owners in 110 countries. He is the author of *The Boomerang Effect* and is Australia's most sought-after marketing keynote speaker. Tim also shares his business and marketing insights on three weekly national radio segments. He regularly travels the world, showing business owners and marketers how to use marketing to gain success and increase profits without spending a fortune.

Tim is also an experienced MC, having hosted the Telstra Business Awards and the annual Australian Podcast Awards. He lives in Melbourne with wife Sophie, three grown children, a cat and dog.

According to Tim, there's never been a better time to start and run and market a business. Ever!

What made you decide to start your current business?

“Hey Timbo, thanks so much for that marketing idea the other day. I’ve implemented it and it worked its pants off!”

This was a passing comment from a business owner I informally helped fifteen years ago when she asked me about how she could get more enquiries into her business. However, this wasn’t an isolated experience.

During my time working in the corporate world, I would often find myself being cornered by a small business owner with a pressing (sometimes desperate) marketing question. I would always make time for these conversations, provide them with my best advice and then think nothing more of it. Often, a few days or weeks later, they would call me to report that they’d taken action and were already seeing positive results.

I absolutely loved this. Eventually, it made me question what the hell I was doing trapped in a corporate cubicle. Instead of helping big brands with their advertising and marketing needs, I could be out on the coalface, helping the smaller end of town transform their beautiful businesses into the empires they deserved to be.

I’m more about taking swift action and less about meetings, which is what the corporate world was (and still is) very good at. Meetings, in my opinion, are toxic.

I decided to say goodbye to the corporate world and start my own business. It was a marketing consultancy called The Ideas Guy. I would offer consulting services to the smaller guys, helping them get control of their marketing. What I didn’t bank on was them not being able to afford me. D’oh! I had to either drop my prices or find other ways to get the same outcome.

“ Create great content and it will certainly generate warm leads ... ”

Opting for the latter (I had a family to feed), I started a podcast called *The Small Business Big Marketing Show*, which I still produce to this day. The podcast's success led to, amongst other things, a public speaking career. Everyone was happy — small business owners got control of their marketing and I got paid what I thought I was worth.

What do you do and how does it provide value to your clients?

For too many business owners, marketing is a dark art. My aim is to shine a very bright light on it. I act to dispel myths, to remove limiting beliefs and to empower business owners so they actually view marketing as an investment to grow their business. I do this in three main ways.

Firstly, I publish an episode of my podcast, *The Small Business Big Marketing Show*, every week, as I have done for the past nine years. At the heart of each episode is a deep conversation with a successful business owner. This person has an interesting growth story and has used marketing in some way, shape or form to catapult them to where they are today. I also share a low-cost marketing idea each week, answer a listener question or two and give away a few prizes.

I love hosting my podcast and it has had an incredible effect on the development of both my business and personal brands. Many listeners tell me that my show provides them with the inspiration and encouragement to overcome their fear or loathing of marketing. They are finally able to embrace it as a fundamental way to grow their business.

Secondly, I speak at many conferences throughout the year to rooms of small business owners. These speaking opportunities have come

directly from creating a podcast that people love. There's a lesson there! Create great content and it will certainly generate warm leads. It will also result in other amazing things happening.

My most popular keynote is all about the concept of being helpful in your marketing. From what I've experienced, it's a game-changer. More on this later (see what I did there? I dropped a little hook to make sure you hang around).

The third way I get business owners to fall in love with marketing their business is through my writing. I'm the author of a book called *The Boomerang Effect* and I blog once a week about a low or no-cost marketing idea.

On top of all that, I do a little bit of coaching and run the odd live event or Mastermind session.

What do you think are the essential qualities or attributes of a great business owner?

I've interviewed over 400 successful business owners on *The Small Business Big Marketing Show* and there are five characteristics they all have in common. In no particular order:

- *They are extremely passionate about what they do* — They love it. Live and breathe it. The idea of their business being a pain is alien to them. It's their baby. They're proud of it. They could talk about it underwater with a mouth full of marbles, whilst eating a pie!
- *They're action takers* — They don't stuff around, wondering what to do. They get on with the doing. There's a saying, "Jump, and build the parachute on the way down." This definitely applies to these people.
- *They're generally very grounded people* — They have control of their ego and are very much givers more than they are takers.

- *They don't know everything* — I'm amazed at how many successful business owners are happy to acknowledge their weaknesses and surround themselves with the best people. Even when the money isn't necessarily there. If you don't ask you don't get, so the lesson here is to ask. Often!
- *They're intuitive* — While a business plan is important and having a clear strategy to get from A to B can be mission critical, I love how many of the successful people I meet know innately whether an idea is good or bad. If it's a good one, they act on it, swiftly.

Is there a significant quote which you live by?

Yes, lots! Here's two:

"If you think what you've always thought, you'll do what you've always done. And if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got."

I love this one. I see too many business owners who are stuck doing the same old thing, time and time again. They're getting the same old results and wondering why nothing's changing and they're not moving ahead. What we do determines the results we get or don't get. If you want to move forward in anything, start to think about challenging the conventions of the industry in which your business operates.

Sometimes those conventions are valid. For example, if you run a skydiving business, safety is a great convention and not worth challenging!

However, a convention that may be worth challenging is the way you present your testimonials in your marketing. For our skydiving example, I imagine there would be all number of expletives coming from the mouths of first-time jumpers who've just landed. "Faaaaark, how amazing was that?!" would be an example of a rather tame

one! Instead of bleeping these out, breaking with convention would have you playing these uncensored and sharing them openly around social media. That would make for a brutally honest, tell-it-how-it-is skydiving brand. And very shareable, I'd imagine.

My other favourite quote is:

“Action creates reaction.”

Between you and I, I'm quite a brilliant procrastinator. I can find every reason in the book not to do something, but when I do take action, it always leads to a reaction. A result. It might not be the result I'm looking for, but by taking action, I've created momentum. I can harness that momentum to move things forward.

Do you believe marketing is an essential skill?

Absolutely, unequivocally marketing is an essential skill for every business owner to respect, master and love. Having interviewed over 400 successful business owners on *The Small Business Big Marketing Show*, another common trait they all share is a deep respect for marketing. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that, while they don't actually use the word 'hobby' to describe their passion for marketing, they certainly talk about the marketing of their business in that way.

You see, when something is a hobby, you can't wait to do it again. You have fun doing it and you are happy to allocate time, money and other resources in the pursuit of it.

My wish is for every business owner to view the marketing of their precious business as a hobby. While your accountant may view marketing as an expense (which is fine because all marketing expenditure is tax deductible), I want you to view it as an investment in the longevity and health of your business.

In your opinion, what is the difference between marketing, branding and advertising?

Marketing is what you do when you can't go and see someone. In an ideal world, each of us would head out and meet individually (one-on-one) with those who we think would benefit from buying from us. Time prevents us from doing this. As marketers, it's our job to create marketing messages that resonate deeply with our prospects to the point that they feel confident enough to buy from us.

Branding is building an emotional attachment between your business and your customers. The reality is, people can copy what we do, but not who we are. This is why we want to build a business that emotionally connects with our buyers. A business that is so empathetic that people feel emotionally connected to us. In cattle terms, a brand is an indelible imprint. That's exactly what we want to leave on the minds of our customers.

Advertising is just one of many communication channels that gives you the opportunity to convince someone to buy from you. It sits alongside publicity, networking, content creation and so on.

Where did you learn your marketing skills and would you recommend this path to others?

I studied marketing at university, spent the next decade or so working in a large advertising agency, then had a job as the marketing manager for Flight Centre. All I've ever known is marketing.

Here's what I've learned — everything is marketing and marketing is everything. There's no right or wrong path to sharpening your marketing skills and know-how. The fact that you're reading this is a great start. Here are five other ways to become a better marketer:

- *Put at least two hours per week aside to listen to podcasts* — *The Small Business Big Marketing Show, I Love Marketing and How I Built This* are good places to start. If this means not binge-watching the next season of *Game of Thrones*, so be it!
- *Read more books* — This doesn't necessarily mean marketing books. Call me weird, but I actually get a lot of my marketing inspiration from reading rock stars' autobiographies! They're generally incredibly hard workers and they work hard at building strong brands (or should that be *bands*?).
- *Grab a coffee (or Skype meeting if they're overseas) with someone whose marketing you admire* — Avoid asking them if you could pick their brains (that hurts!). Instead, tell them how much you admire what they're doing and that you'd love to understand it more. Be sure to offer something in exchange for their knowledge bombs.
- *Take a long, hard look at the marketing of the biggest brand in your industry* — They must be doing something right. Where do they advertise? Do they have an email sign-up form on their website? Do they use spokespeople? What does their social media footprint consist of? Is their copy funny, serious or educational?
- *Attend events* — In doing so, meet as many new people as you can. Check out Meetup.com for marketing and business events in your area. Head overseas and attend one of the big marketing conferences. Join your local Chamber of Commerce and actively get involved.

**There are so many different marketing theories out there.
Which do you believe are the best to follow?**

There are plenty of good marketing techniques and a whole lot of crook ones. I personally subscribe to the concept I call the 'Boomerang Effect', where you get back from your marketing far more than you put in. It's when your marketing is so good, it returns multiple outcomes. I'm talking about more brand awareness, more enquiries, more warm leads and more sales. Underpinning the Boomerang Effect

“ Take off your business owner’s hat, your marketer’s hat and just be human! Don’t you just love being helpful? ”

is the simple concept of being insanely helpful in your marketing.

Let’s spend a moment reflecting on being helpful. Take off your business owner’s hat, your marketer’s hat and just be human! Don’t you just love being helpful? Don’t you just love being helped? It’s a physiological fact that being helpful releases endorphins into your bloodstream. This is a natural, addictive drug and it makes us feel good.

If you’re still in doubt, think about the last time you were helpful. How’d it make you feel? How did the recipient of your helpfulness react? I think we both know the answers to these leading questions.

Now put your marketer’s hat back on.

Helpful marketing is a term I came up with for taking your content marketing to a whole new level. It demands that your content actually be helpful! There’s plenty of content out there just filling space. It doesn’t solve problems and it doesn’t improve the lives of customers. Start Googling some sites in your industry and you’ll see what I mean.

Yes, there are pages and pages of content out there, but are they actually helping customers learn more about what’s on offer so they can make more informed purchase decisions? Is the majority of content created by businesses actually answering the questions customers most want answers to? Are businesses actually sharing valuable insights and solving problems? Or is it all just ‘push’ marketing?

You know that stuff you get in the mail? That’s, more often than not, ‘push’ marketing. That is, it pushes messages upon unsuspecting recipients.

“Buy now!”

“Closing soon!”

“Don’t miss out!”

It’s just push, push, push. If you’re anything like me, you stand over the rubbish bin and just dump it in there. Out of the letterbox and into the bin. A similar thing happens with spam emails sent by businesses, but this time the delete button is the bin! You don’t get that with helpful marketing.

The bottom line is that as a business owner, you want to increase warm enquiries to your business by attracting prospects through the constant provision of useful, helpful information. How are you going to do that? Through creating content that educates, engages and empowers.

Where are you going to place this content? Across both online and offline channels.

In a nutshell, it’s all about providing helpful content that solves problems and improves the lives of your prospects and customers.

What effect has the online world had on the way we market?

The Internet has obviously had a massive impact, but there is a ‘but’. Let’s cover that first.

Don’t get sucked into the idea that online channels are the only way to market these days. I see far too many business owners think that it’s the silver bullet to all their business woes. They think, “I’ll get a Facebook page ... that’ll sort things out,” or “I’m going to start blogging ... that’ll open the floodgates.”

I hear statements like these all too often and yes the Internet does provide some incredible ways to promote your business and build your brand. However, we shouldn't lose sight of all the amazing opportunities the offline world has to offer, such as networking, advertising, publicity, partnerships, events and more.

By all means, embrace the online world, build a strong digital footprint well beyond your website, into social media, video marketing, podcasting, pay-per-click advertising and so on — just remember to look three centimetres up and out every now and then. There's a whole world of offline opportunities waiting for you.

How much attention should we pay to brand name advertising versus marketing, which gives a more direct response?

Brand name advertising is a luxury best reserved for those brands and businesses with much deeper marketing pockets than you and I. They can afford (whether it's a good idea or not) to place signage around key sporting venues, sponsor race car teams, and to run big billboards showing off their big logos along freeways around the country.

While they can afford it, I still wonder about the opportunity cost of say a \$20,000 monthly billboard versus putting the same money into something like SEO or branded audio.

However, as small business owners with limited marketing budgets, we should ensure that every dollar we spend returns multiples. This means directing your marketing efforts towards ideas that have a strong call-to-action. These ideas should encourage people to respond either by booking an appointment, exchanging an email address for some helpful information or (best case scenario) actually placing an order or making a booking. Brand awareness is great, but what we really want is a sale!

You're a big believer in education-based marketing. What is it and why is it so powerful?

In my opinion, there's not enough education-based marketing out there. As I mentioned earlier, too many businesses are desperately pushing unhelpful marketing messages on us. They have no respect for the fact that we're already inundated with a ton of useless information. Consumers are being pulled from pillar to post, and we're exhausted.

Instead of pushing your sales message, focus on educating your prospects and customers so they make a more informed purchase decision, often in your favour. Here's a three-step process to get you started:

- *Capture the questions* — Starting now, write down every question you've ever been asked by a prospect or a customer. Don't judge these questions as being too simplistic or stupid. Just capture every question. Ask your staff, suppliers ... even your customers for questions that spring to mind. You should be able to get a list of at least 50 in an hour.
- *Answer the questions* — Start answering each of these questions better than anyone else. Go into detail without being overly verbose. Speak in normal language, not weird marketing speak. Have fun doing it and do it in a medium you're most comfortable with, such as video, audio, written word or infographics. Here's a little tip — your smartphone is the most amazing marketing machine ever invented. It has a great video camera and capacity, thanks to the Voice Memo app, to record voice. Don't feel you need to invest in fancy, expensive equipment.
- *Add a Knowledge Centre to your website* — Once you start pulling your Q&As together, post the videos to YouTube and the audios to SoundCloud. Then go and create a section on your website called Knowledge Centre and aggregate them all under the one roof. This will become a treasure chest of helpful content that Google will love and index for future searches. Your prospects will also love

being sent specific answers to questions that they've previously enquired about.

Can all businesses use education-based marketing? If so, how?

Every business, no matter what its size, no matter where it is, and no matter who is it selling to can embark on an education-based marketing strategy.

Why? Because the customers of every business have questions that require answering.

That being said, there are some industries for which it is more suited. For example, questions asked of a cafe owner may be limited to what's on the menu? Where are you located? Do you have vegan options? What types of functions do you cater for?

A veterinarian may get a much broader range of questions that span everything from hours of operation and the qualifications of their staff, through to customers wanting to know how to manage their dog's incessant itching.

The bottom line is people are asking these questions and someone needs to be answering them. Someone has to be the most helpful in your industry — it may as well be you!

You also talk about having an editorial mission. What is it and why do businesses need one?

One of the questions that I'm often asked is, "Okay Timbo, I love the idea of Helpful Marketing. I know I'm standing on a mountain of knowledge. I've decided to start blogging or podcasting or vlogging, but how do I figure out what it is I should talk about?"

Simple. You need to get clear on your Editorial Mission. This is an old magazine publisher's term. They use it to decide what articles to include and what not to include in their publication.

Basically, you need to answer these three simple questions to define your Editorial Mission:

1. What have you got to offer?
2. To whom?
3. What outcome can they expect?

By way of example, the Editorial Mission for my business is to produce and share marketing tips and tricks to help small, service-based businesses generate warm enquiries. With this in mind, everything I create is all about helping those people build a better marketing strategy to grow their business. Once you're clear on your Editorial Mission, it becomes super easy to identify, create and source content that reflects what you and your business are all about. You can then use it to filter all your helpful content ideas.

Here's another Editorial Mission — it's for the Better Homes and Garden brand:

“Whether it be a delicious recipe, an inspired decor idea or a clever approach to organising, we help homeowners create a home that is truly their own, to make their home better and a place they love to be.”

Can you see how the helpful content ideas would flow from these two Editorial Missions?

A great acid test to check if your Editorial Mission is right for your brand is to immediately jot down five to ten headlines for future helpful content creation. If they come quickly and easily then you know you're on the right track. If doing this is like pulling teeth, maybe you have to rethink it.

What do you love most about being in a career helping business owners achieve greater levels of success?

What's not to love about it?

One day, a few years ago, I decided to take a look back through my family tree. One thing that was glaringly obvious was the lack of business owners — we were nearly all employees. I found this quite revealing and it explained (at least in my mind) why I have such a deep empathy and respect for anyone who chooses to start their own business. I'm actually in awe of small business owners.

Being in a position to assist others to achieve business success is a real honour. I often find myself looking at these people (you may be one of them) and acknowledging that the work they've put in to build their mini-empires is something I couldn't have done in a million years.

Nowadays, I'm ok with being in awe of other people. For a while there I wasn't. I would kick myself and wonder why the hell couldn't I build a million dollar e-commerce store or a ten million dollar consultancy. Then, as more grey hairs started to appear on my cranium, I had a realisation around what I'm particularly good at and why I've been put on this planet. I realised I'm a great conduit for helping others tell their stories in order for the rest of us to learn. I'm pretty sure that's why my podcast has had such success.

You produce one of the most successful marketing podcasts in the world. Are there still opportunities for others to succeed in this space?

There sure are. So many business owners I speak to think they've missed the boat when it comes to starting a podcast, a blog or a YouTube channel. This is absolutely not the case. It's simply a creative

challenge to ensure that whatever you create is the best or at least right up there!

Don't be scared by this! I can tell you right now that many race off and create helpful content without asking themselves what best-practice looks like. Focus on things like your delivery, frequency of posting content, your appearance, your humour (or lack thereof), your audio and/or visual quality.

Don't feel like you have to create a Hollywood-style production. Simply put your best foot forward and watch yourself and your content improve as you produce more and more of it.



Tim's Podcast and a great example of Helpful Marketing.

What have been the biggest lessons you've learned from the hundreds of people you have interviewed on The Small Business Big Marketing Show?

I've interviewed well over 400 successful business owners who have used marketing in some way, shape or form to get to where they are! Here are some lessons which stand out:

- *If you wait for perfection, you'll never get anything done* — Perfection gets in the way of production. So many of the people I've interviewed had an idea and took it to market knowing that it was (in some cases) embarrassingly undercooked! But they were fine with that as they knew that their offering was 'good enough' and that the market would report back on what needed fixing. They'd then make the necessary improvements and send it back out. App developers do this all the time, they launch an app knowing full well it has bugs in it. That's cool. They let the market play around with it, report back their frustrations, and the next thing we see is a Version 2.0. I'm currently running operating system version 10.11.6 on my Mac. You can do the same with your product or service.
- *Avoid being vanilla in your marketing* — It's boring and you'll go unnoticed for a very long time. Take risks. Be different. I've chatted with a business owner who's created a viral video that increased sales by 600 per cent. Another client breaks Guinness World Records in order to get massive amounts of free publicity. There have been numerous guests who've gone and self-published a book or two that they now use as a glorified business card.
- *Partnerships are one of the fastest ways to growth* — I interviewed Dale Beaumont about this exact strategy, which at its simplest, involves identifying other brands or businesses who have the attention of the people you want to appeal to and striking a mutually beneficial deal with them. The most successful partnership I've struck to date is with Virgin Australia. With so many business owners flying with

them each day, the idea of my show being their inflight business show was very appealing. After a bit of back and forth, *The Small Business Big Marketing Show* has been their in-flight business show for the past 18 months. As a result, my listener base has grown significantly.

- *People buy experiences, not brands* — I'm seeing this happen more and more. Even in my own personal life as a consumer, I'm looking out for businesses and brands that offer a great customer experience, as opposed to just being the biggest in their category. If you're a small business owner or just starting out, take comfort from this. Create an experience so memorable and shareable for your precious customers that they'll tell others and keep coming back themselves time and time again.
- *Be your customer* — Great business owners have a huge amount of empathy for the people who give them money. Their customers! They have a deep understanding of the problems they have and the blockages that stop them moving forward. They also comprehend the expectations and fears customers have when purchasing from them. The more you know about your customers, the easier it will be to create compelling marketing messages that hit them right between the eyes.
- *Challenge convention* — Remember my favourite quote from earlier around the fact that if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got? Successful people have the courage and smarts to challenge conventions. Just because something is done a certain way in their industry, doesn't always mean it's the right way. A great exercise is to list all the conventions in your industry in one column. In another column, write down what the complete opposite of each convention is. What you'll uncover is the opportunity to do things differently, get noticed for all the right reasons.

“ Great business owners have a huge amount of empathy for the people who give them money. ”

What do you see for the future of marketing?

There will always be a new, bright, shiny object to take our eye off the main game, which is to promote and build your business in the most efficient, effective and profitable way possible. A new social media channel. A new gadget. A new advertising medium. Virtual reality. Augmented reality. The list goes on.

The reality is the fundamental principles of marketing will remain unchanged. These are:

- Know your buyer intimately
- Solve a problem better than anyone else
- Be consistent in the way you present your brand
- Fish where the fish are
- Deliver the right message, at the right time, to the right people

Stick to the fundamentals and you will set yourself up for marketing success.

Free BONUS GIFT

Tim Reid has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$199.00 to all readers of this book.

A Collection of the Best Marketing Ideas — In this bonus, you'll get access to Tim Reid's top ten interviews with highly successful business owners who've used marketing to get results. This compilation includes Tim's top ten highly effective low (or no) cost marketing ideas, and shares the first 12 chapters of Tim's popular marketing book *The Boomerang Effect*.

Simply visit the web page below and follow the directions to download:

www.SecretsExposed.com.au/business-experts

LEADERSHIP REWARD



JEREMY CARTER

“ Leadership is about looking in a different direction. While managers spend much of their time looking down, leaders spend more time looking up to find blue sky opportunities and also forward to the future. ”

Jeremy

JEREMY CARTER

Ambitious from the start, Jeremy began his career as a computer engineer before working his way up to being the Oceania Managing Director of the US technology company National Instruments. After leaving the corporate world, he worked for eight years as a leading business and executive coach, winning awards and being recognised for his achievements on multiple occasions.

After attending one of their leadership training courses in the US and seeing the transformational outcomes experienced by attendees, Jeremy decided to bring Rapport Leadership International to Australia, taking on the role of CEO.

Rapport Leadership has offices in the US, Canada and Australia and has over 250,000 graduates of their courses. The company has a thirty-year track record of offering leadership programs, which empower new leaders, business owners and executives with the confidence, self-esteem and focus necessary to improve their personal effectiveness and build high-performance teams.

A thought leader and sought-after public speaker, Jeremy has been featured in the Sydney Morning Herald, Australian Financial Review and Daily Telegraph as well as magazines including AMCHAM, APAC CIO Outlook and Face2Face. His leadership articles on LinkedIn have resulted in him attracting an audience of over 15,000 followers. Jeremy's passion in life is helping people to lead amazing lives through inspiration and education. He achieves this by teaching people tangible leadership skills that help them break through to the next level.

Jeremy is a family man and has sons aged 16, 14 and 10. As President of his local Rotary club and in his personal life, he loves tackling big challenges. Over the years, he has walked the Kokoda Track and competed in three ultra-marathons.

What was your very first significant job and what did it teach you?

My first job was as an Internal Sales Representative (ISR) with a US technology company. It involved taking a 35 per cent pay cut compared to my expectations and to a job I had already been offered but which fell through. What I learned is that what you learn from your job is far more important than what you get paid. When you have a good job, you earn while you learn, which is a huge privilege. If you are starting your career, be humble, take any entry level role you are offered and take the initiative to deliver significantly more value than you are paid for.

Tell us about your early career. What were your major achievements?

On my first day at work, another team member came to me and said, “Jeremy, as you know I am the senior ISR here. I have been here for four years. In about three months, the business will be opening a role for a technical support engineer. That role is mine, so you just need to focus on the ISR stuff, okay?”

I don’t know about you but when someone tells me what I can’t do, I take it as a challenge. I resolved to spend at least three hours after work every weekday and often on Saturdays to keep studying, to learn and master all the products of the company and to become the most technically competent person on the team.

My belief is that your life is just a reflection of what you put out. When you add a lot of value to other people, a lot of value comes back in return. The point is, you need to give prior to getting. Success has a price tag and it requires an unusual level of focus, dedication and action to achieve it. It was about three months after this conversation that my manager called me into his office and told me that I was

the most qualified person to take on the support engineer role. He offered me the position, along with a \$15,000 pay rise.

In the early days of your career, what skills were you lacking and how did you close the gap?

I had a real fear of public speaking after being shamed at a high school presentation that went wrong. I still remember my first technical presentation to Defence Force engineers, where the computer I was using locked up. All my fears (False Expectations Appearing Real) came true that day!

The secret with public speaking is practice and persistence. A courageous person is simply someone who steps up and takes action despite the fear they are feeling. Face your fears and you will only grow in confidence and skills.

What are the most important things you have learnt about how to grow a business?

Growing a business requires a business model that identifies a specific need in the marketplace and delivers an effective solution, at an acceptable price point, with significant profit margins.

When you have the business model correct, it's time to focus on having an effective marketing plan which should consistently deliver a steady stream of new and repeat business and maximise the speed at which cash comes into the business. Growing companies chew up a lot of cash, as startups find out very quickly. Any growth-based business needs to keep a razor-sharp focus on ensuring cash reserves are developed to ensure sustainability.

The better people you employ, the faster this all happens. As a business grows, it doesn't always need more people, sometimes it just needs better ones. This doesn't mean necessarily firing the team you have,

rather making sure that you continue to upskill yourself and your employees.

The MRMO model (described later) we use in our coaching focuses on three key areas — a world-changing mission or purpose, exceptional people and visible values. These combine together to create congruence, consistency and trust.

Trust is the foundation of all great teams. When people trust each other, they are open and honest in their communications with each other, which enables true collaboration to occur. As people and teams collaborate more, people work to their strengths, taking more responsibility and focused action. The results then follow.

Good leaders find ways to build trust with and between their team members. This allows high-quality communication to take place.

What do you think are the essential qualities or attributes of a great business owner?

Great business owners are leaders. They have a clear vision for what they want to create, an unshakable commitment to achieving it, and the courage to take action and live life outside of their comfort zones. They also demonstrate a willingness to empower their team members to grow in skills and confidence, allowing them to become leaders in their own right.

Business owners understand the importance of asking hard questions of themselves and their teams. Building an engaged team requires a collaborative style of leadership which is not about telling people what to do. Instead, it is about sharing facts or information and asking people to

“ Good leaders find ways to build trust with and between their team members. ”

collaborate on developing the solution. This requires the leader to have the self-awareness to dial down their own ego.

As I often say to my clients, “Questions are the answer.” The secret to unlocking success lies in knowing the right questions to ask to help you get the information you need to make the right decisions.

From your perspective, what do you think holds business owners back from achieving their true potential?

The biggest thing that holds us back from achieving our potential is our BS. Many people are not aware of how much BS they have got going on in their heads. By BS I mean belief systems, by the way!

If you believe something to be impossible then, for you, it will be. If you believe that life is hard or people are out to do you over, you tend to attract that. Your mind constantly seeks evidence to reinforce your beliefs. Many of these beliefs were formed at a young age before you were consciously aware of what was really going on. They were passed to you directly from your parents and teachers without you really questioning them.

The good news is that it's never too late to change your beliefs. A belief is just an idea behind which you have collected evidence to support it. If you have the attitude or belief that you know it all, you immediately shut off your opportunity for learning and growth. You may have met people like this. They are so closed minded, there's no point in disagreeing or debating with them.

Be aware of the stories you are telling yourself and how they are impacting your behaviour. If you believe you are one of the best in your field, you will tend to spend a lot of time defending your position and your performance will decrease over time. If you choose to instead believe that you are one of the hardest workers in your field, your focus shifts to building your skills instead of justifying

how good you are. This is what is called 'having a growth mindset', and leads to sustained high performance.

In your opinion, what are most common mistakes you see business owners make?

Failing to plan is planning to fail. Time and again I see business owners stuck in a struggle cycle. They are hoping their circumstances will change when in reality it is them that needs to change. My advice to business owners is to set up annual and quarterly planning sessions so you are clear on your outcomes and accountable for your results. If you fail to do this, you will inevitably repeat the same mistakes over and over and become stuck in a struggle cycle.

What's more, it's ok to admit that as a business owner you don't know it all. Engage some outside assistance and you will get a totally new perspective on your business.

Describe the work that you do and the value it provides to your clients.

Today, I am CEO of Rapport Leadership Australia. By providing a combination of leadership consulting, coaching and high-intensity training sessions, we enable organisations to develop high-performance, leadership-based cultures which attract and retain high-performing employees.

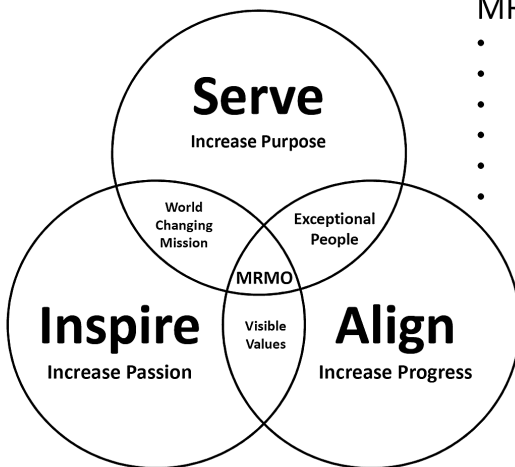
While many organisations looking for training are focused on short-term results, the training programs we deliver are designed to deliver more significant and longer-lasting results. This helps workplaces to become a Magnetic, Respected and Meaningful Organisation (MRMOs).

Magnetism is about the ability of an organisation to attract and retain quality employees.

Respected is about having a reputation for consistently delivering results.

Meaningful refers to having engaged employees who feel proud to be a part of something bigger than themselves, doing work that is making a difference in the world. They love to be part of a culture which encourages real respect and appreciation for each other.

Magnetic, Respected & Meaningful Organisations™



MRMO Benefits

- Increased Ownership
- Higher Levels of Trust
- Greater Engagement
- Inspired Purpose
- Respect and Appreciation
- Community and Belonging

In your opinion, what is leadership?

Leadership, for me, is about the four Cs:

- *Character* — Know who you are and what you will and won't stand for. Being clear on your purpose or mission and being a person of integrity.
- *Clarity* — Have a clear vision of what you want to achieve for yourself and the people around you. Don't just see what is, but more importantly, what can be.

- *Courage* — Be willing to take action, speak up and put yourself outside your comfort zone again and again, to persist through adversity.
- *Communication* — Have awareness and empathy for the people around you and be proactive, positive and honest in your communication.

Why do you think being able to lead effectively is such an important skill?

Effective leadership allows you to bring people together to make great things happen. It requires you to be able to read a situation and have the ability to choose the correct leadership style to maximise the chances of a positive outcome. Opportunities are all around us on a daily basis, but without leadership skills, they will pass us by. As a leader, you must be someone who truly values people and relationships and be fully committed to the service of the people around you.

Do you believe great leaders are made or born? Can anyone become a great leader?

Great leaders are simply a product of their environment. Leadership skills are developed over time. Having great role models helps, but having a more senior leader taking an active interest in your career development will really accelerate your progress.

As I learned from Tony Robbins, a fast path to success is to model yourself on someone who has already achieved what it is that you want to achieve. Find a mentor you respect and meet with them regularly to get the advice and feedback you need to fast track your career.

What do you think are the essential qualities or attributes of a successful leader?

You can't be a leader unless you have followers so firstly you need to earn the right as a leader.

“ Good leadership is about enrolling and inspiring people to buy into your vision ... ”

As you become known as someone who helps and adds value to others, you will become a centre of influence who people go to for advice. Success for any leader comes back to whether they can achieve their vision and goals by assembling the right team to make it happen. Good leadership is about enrolling and inspiring people to buy

into your vision but then supporting them in being successful in the role that they have chosen to play. If each one of your team members is a success then, by definition, you as a leader are also successful.

What is the difference between leadership and management? What's more important?

Leadership and management are two different skill sets.

Management is about maximising the return on the resources that you control. It is about creating order and structure within an organisation to ensure consistency and results. It requires both planning and execution skills to stay on track.

Leadership is about looking in a different direction. While managers spend much of their time looking down, leaders spend more time looking up to find blue-sky opportunities and also forward to the future, creating the compelling vision for where the organisation will end up. Leadership is not about seeing what is but rather, what could be. It is about inspiring your team members to achieve things they never thought possible. Leadership requires next level communication skills to clearly articulate your ideas and thoughts into a form that people will connect with.

Managers typically interact with their team members, using positional power and direction to make things happen. Leadership is about

creating more capability in the people around you, so instead of telling them what to do it makes more sense to ask them the right questions, which gets them thinking. The best leaders don't have all the answers, but they do know the best questions to be asking of themselves and their team members.

Management and leadership are two skills that need to work together for the best result to be achieved. Using only one and not the other will deliver a suboptimal result. Most executives start as managers first and develop their leadership skills over time as their careers progress.

Do you believe there is a right and wrong leadership style to have?

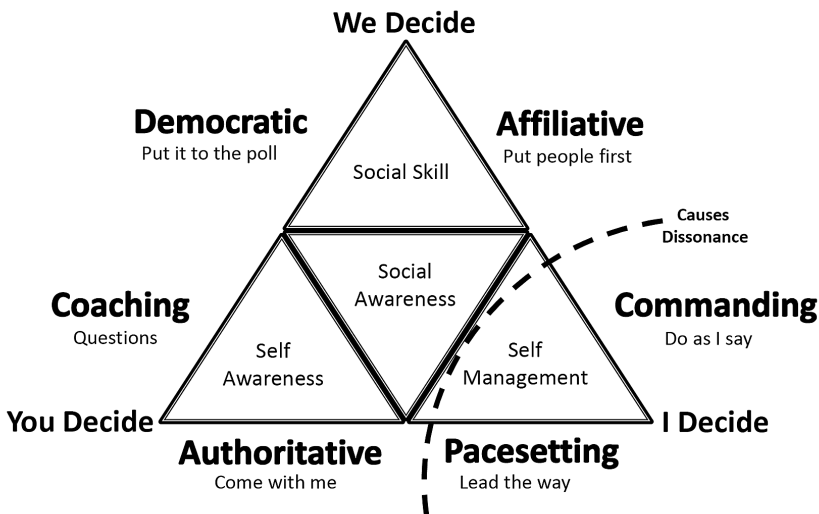
Successful leadership requires an understanding of the importance of context. What might be appropriate behaviour in one context is inappropriate in another. The right leadership style is what is required at that time to elicit the response that you are looking for.

The consulting firm, Hay McBer, conducted research on a random sample of 3,871 executives selected from a database of more than 20,000 executives worldwide. They found that the most effective leaders draw on six different leadership styles, which include pacesetter (take control and lead from the front), commanding (using authority to exert control), authoritative (setting a goal and letting people chase it), coaching (providing feedback and ideas), democratic (putting it to the vote) and affiliative (providing praise and working to support your team). The effective use of these styles requires emotional intelligence.

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) was popularised by Daniel Goleman in 2010 when he published a book under the same name. He identified four components to EI, including self-management (delayed gratification), self-awareness (of your emotional state and thinking processes), social awareness (of others' emotional states) and social skill (communication ability).

EI is both an innate and a developed skill. In terms of leadership success, a Harvard study found that EI is twice as important to success as either IQ or technical skill combined. EI gives you the intuition to decide what is the most appropriate leadership style that the situation calls for. Most people work to their strengths and leaders and managers are no different. Of all the EI competencies, self-management usually develops first and often results in leaders relying too much on commanding or pacesetter styles that can create dissonance within the team. Good leaders will use a combination of all the styles at times rather than just one or two.

EI Competencies and Leadership Styles



What tips do you have for dealing with and motivating millennials?

Millennials are people too! I do not believe that they need to be 'dealt with' and I think you should motivate them in the same way as you would your other team members. If someone requires you to motivate them differently, it is a sign that the work they are doing is

not aligned with their values. When people understand the importance of the work that they are doing (the impact it has on others) and take pride in delivering great work, there should never be a lack of motivation. The other secret to having a motivated team is to hire motivated individuals.

Authenticity and vulnerability seem to be new leadership buzzwords. Do you believe these attributes should be adopted if you want to become a better leader?

Authenticity is not just a buzzword, it is a style of living. It is about embracing all of who you are (the good and the bad) and not putting on false pretences or being someone you are not.

People will spot you a mile off if you are not being genuine in who you are. Authenticity is about developing your own unique leadership style. Authentic leaders engender a greater level of trust from the people around them and communication becomes easier as a result.

Vulnerability is about being a real human being. Being honest in admitting you don't have all the answers. In some corporate cultures, showing vulnerability is showing weakness and others may look for ways to take advantage of you or attack you for it. In my opinion, it takes great strength to show vulnerability as a leader and when you do so, you give permission for your team to do the same and stronger relationships are formed.

For team members, being vulnerable involves being honest about how they are feeling, admitting they don't know what is going on or how to do something. At the core of it all is trust. When you show vulnerability, people are more inclined to trust you and are likely to be honest with you. When

“ When you show vulnerability, people are more inclined to trust you and are likely to be honest with you. ”

people are honest with you, you will have the information you need to ensure that the outcomes you are chasing are achieved as quickly as possible.

What are the most important things you have learnt about being a successful leader?

Be the type of person others want to be around. When you are working on something that is important to you, a great level of energy or enthusiasm will come from this. This energy will attract other people to you. Take a sincere and genuine interest in people and find ways to add value to them.

If you are a business owner, when should you start looking for and training up new leaders?

Developing new leaders is a key focus for all effective leaders.

Leadership development is a process and takes a significant amount of time and effort. Similar to growing a vegetable patch, you must prepare the ground, plant the seeds, water them regularly, and pull up weeds when they appear. You must also protect them from the birds and insects that would like to steal them away before you get to enjoy the fruits of your harvest.

Some business owners are hesitant to train their staff because they worry they may then leave their organisation. A far worse outcome is where you don't train your staff and they stay. Some of the staff you invest in and have the highest hopes for may well leave your organisation but this is not evidence that you should stop what you are doing. It is important to continue creating a vision for each of your team members about where their career is heading. If they feel like they are on the right bus, having fun and heading to a cool destination, odds are they will stay.

What are some practical things business owners can do to improve their leadership skills?

Sit down and write a description of what sort of leader you want to be known as. What would you want your team members to say to you as feedback 12 months from now if you were being the best leader you could be?

Get comfortable being uncomfortable. Put yourself into new situations that challenge you to develop new skills. Step up and have the difficult conversations that are needed to bring the best out of the people around you.

Develop a clear vision and mission for yourself and your business area. Enlist the help of someone external for a fresh perspective on how to do this effectively.

Spend more time building relationships with your team members. Find opportunities to praise people for work well done.

Collaborate with your team members. Don't tell them what is going to happen, tell them what the facts are or share the issues you are facing. Engage them in helping to solve the problems.

Where do Australian leaders fall short in delivering results?

A study completed in 1946 by the Labor Relations Institute of NY examining what employees want and what employers think they want has been replicated four times over the past fifty years. What these studies shows is that what employers think is least important to retaining their staff is actually the most important.

While job security and good wages are important, the top three things that employees want are related to soft skills. Employees want to feel

appreciated with specific and heartfelt praise, not a generic ‘well done’ or \$100 bonus on their payslip. Employees want to feel ‘in’ on things, connected with the thinking of the manager behind the scenes and included emotionally in what is going on.

The third need by employees is ‘sympathetic help with personal problems’, which is something that many managers shy away from. The truth is our personal and professional lives interface continually. Managers need a level of emotional intelligence (EI) to be aware of the emotional state of their team members and to be able to help them through their challenges.

The important thing to remember is that people are individuals and deserve to be treated as such. Never assume you know what your team needs from you, instead be sure to ask them. Strong communication builds strong relationships. If you tune in and discover what your employees really want and then meet this need, your odds of recruiting and retaining the best staff will be significantly increased.

Employer Focus

1. Good wages
2. Job security
3. Promotion/growth opportunities
4. Good working conditions
5. Interesting work
6. Personal loyalty to workers
7. Tactful discipline
8. Full appreciation for work done
9. Sympathetic help with personal problems
10. Feeling “in” on things

Employee Wants

1. Full appreciation for work done
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Study by Labor Relations Institute of NY published 1946 in Foreman Facts, replicated with similar results by Ken Kovach (1980); Valerie Wilson, Achievers International (1988); Bob Nelson, Blanchard Training & Development (1991); Sheryl & Don Grimme, GHR Training Solutions (1997-2001).

Tell us about one or two leaders who have had the biggest impact on your life. What made them so special?

It was a real turning point for me when at the age of 18 I came across the book *Unlimited Power* by Anthony Robbins. He taught me about the amazing power of the human mind to achieve great results. This gave me a real thirst to learn more and launched me on a personal development quest to discover more of my potential.

The second one would be Brad Sugars, founder of ActionCOACH. Brad is an amazing coach, business mentor and teacher. When I was Oceania GM for a US technology company, I sought the help of one of Brad's business coaching team, which absolutely changed my life. This coach taught me the importance of asking the right questions. I didn't appreciate the power of the questions he asked me at the time but have since realised that questions have the power to transform people's beliefs, behaviours and quality of life.

"What is it that you most want to achieve in the next 12 months, Jeremy?" he asked in one of our first sessions. "Well, I guess I want ...", I began. "Guess?" he responded. "The only way you ever achieve anything is by gaining absolute clarity on the outcome and being 100 per cent committed to achieving it. Go again, what do you really want?"

Coaching helped me to understand that as the manager of the business I shouldn't be the one working the hardest and that I was setting a bad example by doing so. My role was to set clear expectations for each of my team and to provide the support, training and accountability for them to achieve their highest potential. After realising this, over the next twelve months our branch posted 40 per cent sales growth without adding any new staff. Better still, I was working less than 50 hours per week. Knowing that coaching worked made it much easier to leave my corporate career and also join the ActionCOACH team.

What are your favourite leadership quotes and why do you think they are so important?

As technology progresses, so too does the rate of change. As Alvin Toffler wrote, “The illiterate of the future will not be those who cannot read and write but rather those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”

To survive and thrive as individuals or organisations, we need to be adaptable and to respond quickly to changing market conditions. Gone are the days of a job for life. People now need to view themselves as sole-practitioners who add value. Those who add the most value are assured of an ongoing and well rewarded career path.

What this means for employers is that the value proposition has also changed for employees. The amount you are paying has become less important than the professional development that you can offer, the ability to make people feel part of something important and the culture of the team that you have created. This requires soft skills and emotional intelligence to deliver. It requires being proactive and overcoming your fears in order to have empowering conversations with your team members so you can help them achieve more.

Here are some other quotes I live by:

“The hardest conversations deliver the best results.”

It’s true. The conversations that cause you the most angst are really what is standing in your way between you and success. The secret is to understand that the fear that you feel is a sign that you need to step up and do something. The energy that comes from this will actually help you be more resourceful in getting the best outcome. Stop focusing on the fear and instead focus on the result that lies on the other side of the conversation.

“You can’t manage people, you can only manage agreements.”

As a manager, if you spend your time managing people, you will be frustrated and ineffective. Your team is likely to be frustrated as well. Managing agreements is about ensuring that you have set clear expectations for your team and put them in writing. However, this is not just about what you expect from your team, it should also be about what they can expect from you. If you want loyalty from your team members, you need to show loyalty to them. The same goes for agreements — if you don't keep your agreements, how can you expect your team members to keep theirs? If you ever find yourself in the position of not being able to keep an agreement, be proactive and let the person know at the very first available opportunity.

“The only thing to know for certain is that there is always much, much more to learn.”

One of my personal role models, Alan Stewart graduated from the University of Newcastle at the age of 97 after completing his fourth degree in the area of complementary medicine. Having spent his working career as a dentist, he was interviewed by the local newspaper journalist who was curious as to why someone would still be studying at the age of 97. As Alan replied, “People keep on coming to me and asking the secret to living a long life. I figured it was my responsibility to go and study the science of the matter rather than sharing an unconsidered opinion.”

Where to from here? We are truly blessed with the quality of life and opportunities that are available to us living in a first world country today. It is way too easy to take for granted what we have and unfortunately, for the average Australian, this has also led to a sense of complacency.

The life experiences that have happened to you up until now have been just what you need to launch forward and create your ideal life. You have been put on this planet to make a difference and to realise your true potential. It is only by becoming committed and taking action that this can happen.

I would like to share with you another of my favourite quotes by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it!”

Over the coming years, what do you see as the major challenges facing businesses?

I believe disruption through technology is here to stay. Many careers will be displaced in the next decade through artificial intelligence, which can do the job more reliably and cost-effectively than humans. In Australia, many business owners are way too complacent. I see them getting caught up in the misguided idea that ‘we are the lucky country’, and ‘she’ll be right, mate’.

As part of your planning process, it makes sense to ask yourself hard questions like, ‘How would we survive if the market value of our products fell by 50 per cent in the next 12 months?’ Just because you have a good value proposition today, doesn’t mean you will sustain this into the future. Think of what Blockbuster Video, Borders bookstores or Nokia could have done differently for some inspiration.

Are there any significant quotes which you live your life by?

I have always been a fan of Jim Rohn’s classic quote, “Never wish life was easier, wish you were better.” Wishing for an easy life is crazy because it is in our most challenging moments that we are truly defined. My belief is that the universe does not send challenges our way to make life difficult, rather they are opportunities to help us grow and discover our true potential.

Another quote I live my life by (and already mentioned) is, “The hardest conversations deliver the best results.” For me, this is a reminder that taking the easy path will not lead to the best outcomes. Having a hard conversation is about calling it as you see it and giving people the feedback they need in order to work more effectively. It

is the conversations we know we need to have that cause us to feel fear or anxiety. When you feel the fear, this is a sign that it is time to step up and take action.

The third quote I use regularly that works hand-in-hand with the one above is, “What I tolerate, I deserve.” This serves as a reminder that I set the benchmark for how I allow other people to treat me and the level of performance I accept from my team members. If you tolerate unacceptable behaviour or substandard performance, you are in effect endorsing it. This kind of behaviour will continue and you have no-one but yourself to blame for it.

You often can fix many of the larger behavioural problems in your organisation by focusing on the small problems first. An example of this is the personal presentation of your staff members. If you allow them to get away with not meeting the dress standards for your organisation, they will fail to meet standards in many other areas also.

Knowledge has no power without action, so I’d like to leave you with a final encouraging quote by Johann von Goethe, “Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.”

Free BONUS GIFT

Jeremy Carter has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$97.00 to all readers of this book.

Organisational Leadership Review — This powerful leadership analysis tool will allow you to review the 10 key areas of organisational leadership and to identify specific areas that are holding you and your team back from greater success. Kindly offered by Jeremy Carter, this report will highlight leadership areas for you to focus on in order to build trust, teamwork and employee engagement within your organisation.

Simply visit the web page below and follow the directions to download:

www.SecretsExposed.com.au/business-experts

TECH WITH TOUCH



AMANDA STEVENS

“ How many times in any given day are your customers having an experience with your business that's literally worthy of a Friday night dinner party conversation? ”

A handwritten signature of Amanda in black ink, featuring a large, stylized 'A' and the name 'Amanda' written in a cursive script.

AMANDA STEVENS

Amanda Stevens is an author, speaker and business advisor. As well as being a renowned thought leader on the subjects of marketing, the customer experience and the future of consumers, she has a passion for small business. So much so that in her spare time she buys, renovates and sells businesses the way other people do with houses!

Amanda founded her first marketing agency in 1995, at the 'ripe old age' of 21. After growing it into a multi-million dollar operation, she sold to a multinational recruitment company, freeing up her time to help guide other businesses.

As a speaker and consultant, Amanda combines current consumer insights with fascinating research into buying behaviour, delivering powerful strategies to help business owners form better connections with their customers. She is also the author of five books on sales and marketing, including her best-seller, *Turning Customers into Advocates*.

Amanda has a double degree in consumer psychology and marketing. While she has worked as a consultant for large brands, including Lend Lease, Microsoft, Procter and Gamble and even the Australian Liberal Party, she gets a real kick out of working with startups and fast-growing small businesses.

According to Amanda, there's never been more opportunity for small business to compete with big business and scale quickly. She says that brands and organisations which combine the best of 'high tech' (automation, artificial intelligence and virtual reality) with the best of 'high touch' (personalised, human experiences) will win the battle for relevance in the next three to five years.

Amanda is a former Young Australian of the Year (Career Achievement in NSW). In March 2018, she was named the Keynote Speaker of the Year by the Professional Speakers Association of Australia.

When did you first discover your passion for business?

I've always had quite an entrepreneurial streak and had lots of little ideas and 'start-ups' when I was growing up — everything from lemonade stands to selling upcycled stationery. A friend and I even built a toll gate on a local bush track and charged all the kids a fifty cent toll to go through. It was so successful that we hired some younger kids to man the booth and we just collected the money. It wasn't a very legal business and didn't last long, but it introduced me to the power of a recurring income business model and the benefits of outsourcing!

What was your very first significant job and what did it teach you?

When I was at university I was yearning for some real-world experience in marketing and small business. I had a part-time job in a sandwich shop and every day I would deliver lunches to a marketing consultancy — the kind of place I wanted to work. I begged for a job every day for nearly a month before I finally offered to work for free for a week.

I outperformed every other consultant that week in terms of sales of their marketing newsletter. By Friday, the managing director offered me a job starting the following Monday.

This experience taught me a valuable lesson around the power of proof. That lesson is my motivation mantra today — be so good that they can't ignore you.

My first job was at The Frog and Toad sandwich shop, but it led me to my first real job at Results Corporation, one of the most exciting and educational places to work. I got to tour with the likes of Jay Abraham and Michael Gerber and got some very fast-tracked experience in small business consulting. It was an amazing three years and fostered a love for business, marketing and personal development.

Tell us about your early career. What were your major achievements?

After my Results Corporation experience, I decided to move to Sydney from Brisbane to freelance and work with a small group of clients. That plan took on a life of its own. At the age of 21, I found myself with a growing marketing agency on my hands in a city I barely knew. Although it wasn't what I planned, I decided to go for it. Within a few years I had a team of staff and a growing client base. Before long, I was turning over more than a million dollars a year.

In 2001, I was named Young Businesswoman of the Year by Sydney Business Review and in 2003 I won the Young Australian of the Year Award for Career Achievement in NSW. Those awards led me to several speaking opportunities, which I did not enjoy at all. I would get so nervous and often physically ill, but these speaking engagements worked incredibly well as a business development strategy so I set about finding a speaking coach. I decided that if I was going to speak, I wanted to be really good at it.

I worked with a speaking coach intensively for 18 months and I found that the better I got at speaking, the more I enjoyed it. The more I enjoyed it, the better I was at it.

In 2011, I had an opportunity to sell my marketing agency to a large multinational firm. I grabbed that opportunity with both hands because it meant I could focus on what I'd become truly passionate about — speaking.

Now, I spend the majority of my time presenting, but I also still consult to business owners on their marketing and customer experience.

What is the best piece of business advice anyone has ever given you?

When I sold my company I got some bad legal advice and ended up losing out financially. It was really disappointing and I wasted a lot of emotional energy on the stress of it.

A very successful friend of mine gave me some tough love. He pointed out that the amount of focus I was giving to something that I ultimately couldn't change was far more damaging than the dollar amount.

He said, "You've got two choices. You can be bitter or you can be better."

I think anyone in business knows the pain of a setback or disappointment so I now apply that advice to myself and share it with any clients who are facing frustrating times.

From your perspective, what do you think holds business owners back from achieving their real potential?

I believe that we are in an era where the customer experience is everything. Due to the power of word of mouth and 'word of mouse', the customer experience is emerging as the most potent marketing strategy. Turning your customers into raving fans who do all your marketing for you is the key to exponential business growth.

How do you describe customer advocacy? What's the difference between loyal customers and advocates?

Customer advocacy is when customers go beyond brand loyalty. It's that next step where they become raving fans. They go out of their

way to tell their friends and family about you and basically become your walking, unpaid advertisement.

What are the top five reasons why customer advocacy is critically important to business success?

1. I believe customer advocacy is the ultimate measure of business success. It indicates how well your customer experience and marketing strategies are connecting with your customers. You can have the best, highest quality product in the world, but if the customer experience isn't excellent, it will create a disconnect and impact the perceived quality of your product. A great product or service can't overcome bad service. Amazing service can often overcome an ordinary product or service.
2. Customer advocacy is the most cost-effective, powerful marketing strategy. Imagine if your customers each referred an average of two other customers to you each year. Your business would triple! It's very difficult to achieve that with other sales, marketing or advertising channels.
3. High levels of customer advocacy future proofs your business. Generally, if I'm an existing customer and I'm referring my friends and family to a business, my loyalty creeps up a little each time I do that. Therefore, having a referral-based business increases average loyalty and average dollar spend. Customer advocacy delivers exponential impact!
4. The research shows that businesses which offer a superior customer experience generally attract and retain quality staff. Who doesn't want to work for a brand that values their customers, empowers their staff to put their customers first and encourages a fun environment where communication, celebration and connection are paramount?
5. Customer advocacy has a domino effect. Once two or three layers of customer advocacy take hold in an organisation (customers tell

their friends, who tell their friends and so on), a business can scale quite quickly.

What's the secret to getting more of your users to talk about you to their family and friends?

Creating customer advocacy and increasing referrals must start with an honest assessment of your customer experience. How many times in any given day are your customers having an experience with your business that's literally worthy of a Friday night dinner party conversation?

As a business owner, you must understand that every touch point you have with your customers is an opportunity to exceed expectations, to connect and build a brand new fan.

The other important aspect is how you reward referrals. Again, as humans, we will repeat behaviors that we are rewarded for. For this reason, incentivising and rewarding referrals will increase the likelihood of a customer doing it again.

How should a company handle bad reviews?

For many businesses — those in the hospitality sector for example — online reviews are the lifeblood. In fact, according to Zendesk, over 88 per cent of consumers have been influenced by an online customer review before deciding to buy.

It's important to encourage reviews in multiple ways and via multiple channels. In the event that you get a negative review from a customer who is annoyed, dissatisfied and angry, what do you do?

“ It's important to encourage reviews in multiple ways and via multiple channels. ”

Here are the steps to take to diffuse a negative review.

- *Respond promptly* — A prompt response to a negative review shows the customer that you care and value their opinion. Address the concern and without fuelling it, acknowledge and validate their complaint. This in itself will often dilute the sting in their review and be the catalyst to turning it around.
- *Take the issue offline* — Depending on the problem, rather than respond to an adverse review by leaving a public comment, it may be better to reply privately via email or phone. If you resolve the matter to the customer's satisfaction, leave a brief comment on the public thread thanking them for their time and expressing how delighted you are that a solution was found. This means other readers can see that you swiftly addressed the issue directly and personally with the customer without the need to air dirty laundry.
- *Be gracious, be grateful* — A negative review, particularly one that expresses a strong opinion, may stimulate emotions that could lead to a sterner response than necessary. Your mindset and reaction is critical. Try to view the complaint as a gift rather than a personal attack. Take a little time to collect your thoughts and respond by saying something like, "Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback. I'd value the opportunity to speak with you about your experience. Please contact me as soon as it's convenient."
- *Fix it by going the extra mile* — An unhappy customer is often one of your most vocal future advocates. Depending on how you address and remedy the issue, you can create a situation where the disgruntled customer is happier than one who had an experience that was satisfactory or no reason for complaint. By acknowledging and compensating the customer not just for their inconvenience but also their time, you can build a connection with the customer to the point where they feel validated, acknowledged and valued.
- *Don't strive for five stars 100 per cent of the time* — While nobody seeks negative reviews, having some balanced reviews can help.

If every single review is gushing and positive with five stars, potential customers can become suspicious that the reviews are manufactured rather than being authentic. As paradoxical as it sounds, reviews that have constructive feedback can contribute to building a more trustworthy, authentic review profile.

- *Share reviews with your employees* — Make sure everyone in your business is aware of reviews you've received, both positive and negative. Acknowledge, celebrate and reward the positive reviews and encourage transparent and constructive team discussion around the negative ones. Not only will that help to ensure you prevent similar issues in the future, it builds a customer-centric mindset among employees.

What tips would you give a retail business that hasn't made the jump online and why do they need to embrace the digital realm?

Many traditional retail business owners are fearful of online channels because they see them as a competitor or as an alternative to bricks and mortar retail stores. This is not the case. It's not an either/or proposition.

Online shopping is here to stay and over 40 per cent of consumers now say that they get a better experience online than they do in store. Yes, that's right — more than 40 per cent of consumers feel that they get a better experience from a website than from a human being.

That tells me two things. Firstly, the retail sector needs to lift its game. Also, consumers are shopping online in droves and that will only continue to grow. With this in mind, you need to be where your customers are. If they're already shopping online, be there rather than seeing it as competition to your physical retail presence.

Being online and having an ecommerce presence shouldn't be scary or feel daunting. Find the right person to help you and use your digital channel to help your bricks and mortar strategy and vice versa.

What impact do you think Amazon's arrival in Australia will have on retail business?

While Amazon launching in Australia hasn't yet been the game changer that many predicted, it has certainly created a new reality. However, many businesses focus too much attention on what Amazon are doing and not enough on what they're not doing themselves, which is not engaging their customers. They're not putting these customers at the heart of everything they do, they're not investing in staff and they're not empowering their staff to treat customers like the key to a brand's survival that they truly are.

Jim Rohn put it best when he said, "One customer well taken care of could be worth more than \$10,000 in advertising." It might be an old and simplistic adage, but it stands the test of time. The ripple effect of a delighted customer who is inspired to share their experience with their friends and via online reviews could be the Amazon antidote that many retailers are desperately searching for.

Amazon will continue to have a mind-boggling array of products and services at very competitive prices, but it's not just what they sell that will be impressive. Amazon has mapped out their customer experience in microscopic detail and their sole objective will be exceeding expectations at every touch point.

This year and in the future, Amazon will be completely focused on its customers. The people who work there are not watching the clock or prioritising putting stock away before they make it possible for you to complete an online transaction. Customers feel like they are the priority. Despite the non-human, highly automated nature of the channel, the Amazon experience is friendly, personalised and efficient.

Improving your customer experience and empowering the people who deliver customer experience is the most powerful defence when it comes to the mighty power of Amazon.

To quote my mantra — you can choose to be bitter or you can choose to be better.

You're not a fan of benchmarking or measuring customer satisfaction. Why?

I'm amazed at how many businesses spend a lot of money measuring customer satisfaction. I see brands big and small assessing and evaluating how 'satisfied' their customers are. It makes me scratch my head.

I was recently asked to complete a survey for my internet provider after calling their tech support.

The questions were, 'On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being not satisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied, how would you rate your experience today?' and 'On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely would you be to recommend us to a friend?'

Firstly, why would anyone be striving for their customers to feel 'satisfied' ... even 'extremely satisfied'?

Satisfaction doesn't create word of mouth marketing and it certainly doesn't inspire brand advocacy. I'm unlikely to spend time with my friends at a dinner party raving about a customer experience that left me 'satisfied' from head to toe.

Secondly, understanding how likely a customer is to recommend your brand doesn't really tell you much. Whether you score a 1 or a 10, it doesn't give you any insight into why.

Don't get me wrong, I'm all for benchmarking and quantifying your

“ To quote my
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be better. ”

customer advocacy (or lack of). However, in order to take action and remedy or improve your customer experience, the qualitative is just as critical.

Rather than striving for satisfied customers, wouldn't you want your customers to feel delighted, amazed, thrilled and ecstatic that their expectations were exceeded?

Instead of asking your customers to rank satisfaction from 1-10, imagine if you asked this question:

"If you were talking about your customer experience with our brand to a friend, what would you say?"

I'm well aware that this isn't nearly as easy to spreadsheet and make a pretty line graph from. However, when it comes to understanding brand advocacy and learning how to foster, nurture and multiply it exponentially, it pays to understand the 'why' just as much as the 'what'. Doing this will give you depth of insight that even the prettiest of line graphs can't compete with.

What do you love most about being in a career helping business owners achieve greater levels of success?

I absolutely love business and I love helping business owners realise their potential. I think that most business owners overthink things (I know because I've been there) and find themselves in a situation where they can't see the wood for the trees. When I'm working with a client I often provide the power of the external perspective. I help them focus on what's important and what's going to actually get traction rather than just spinning their wheels.

How do you think technology will affect your business and that of your clients moving forward?

I think technology is dramatically changing the business landscape in nearly every sector. Change in this respect is a given and is going to continue to produce exciting opportunities around automation and the ability to scale.

I also believe that the holy grail for marketing, when it comes to the customer experience, is going to be the combination of high tech and high touch — leveraging the benefits of technology for automation, but combining it with the personalised, customised human touch points that are memorable and create customer advocacy.

What do you do to stay up to date with the latest trends and strategies that can benefit you and your clients?

I'm tapped into a number of research sources and also commission my own research a couple of times a year. Things are changing so rapidly and it's important to stay ahead of relevant insights. This allows me to detect and monitor trends impacting consumer behaviour and brand advocacy.

I invest heavily in professional development and attend a lot of conferences and workshops. I also seek out market leaders and find out how to learn from them first-hand. I recently had a VIP day with Ali Brown, who is one of the world's leading internet marketers. One-on-one time with her was one of the best investments I've ever made.

I also carve out time in my schedule each week to research, explore and think. That thinking could be about how to bring some new content to my clients and followers or it could be how to present an insight in a way that connects with my audiences.

What do you see as the major opportunities for businesses in the near future?

I think that in the next few years the businesses that will win the battle for relevance are those that focus on three key strategies today — Customer Centricity, Celebration and Collaboration.

Customer Centricity

This is about putting your customers at the heart of everything you do. It means leveraging technology in a way that achieves scale and automation but that also delivers a personalised touch. It means having a clear and specific customer credo and empowering your team to deliver on that credo in a way that builds and maintains customer advocacy.

Celebration

In any business, there are key milestones in the relationships with your customers. There are external milestones that relate to their life events — birthdays, weddings, divorces, starting a business to name a few. Then there are internal milestones — anniversaries, spend levels and number of visits.

Celebrating these milestones gives you a unique opportunity to cement the relationship you have with your customers and develop what I call ‘dormant referral opportunities’.

Regardless of your industry, your business type and the size of your business, referral opportunities are sitting, dormant, in your customer base right now.

There are loyal customers who buy your product or service, love your brand and are loyal to your business but aren’t your vocal advocates.

Why? Because they don’t have a specific, top-of-mind reason to talk about you at a dinner party.

If you analysed your customer base, segmented the top ten or twenty percent of your customers and sent them a thank you gift, it could possibly generate more word-of-mouth business than you've had in years. It would make your brand top-of-mind and give your customers a reason to talk about you.

With over 60 per cent of consumers citing 'indifference' as the reason they leave a brand or shop around, a simple program to reward, recognise and express gratitude could be your greatest defence against an era of increasingly fragmented consumer loyalty.

I remember many years ago when my team and I were managing the marketing for a major mortgage provider. We conducted some research with new customers to identify opportunities to improve the customer experience in the early stages of the relationship.

Overwhelmingly, the aspect of the onboarding process that new customers were most disappointed with was the fact that there was no official welcome pack. It was a key milestone that wasn't recognised. That lack of basic recognition resulted in a lost opportunity to enhance the customer experience and set a strong foundation for long-term loyalty and referrals.

We are wired to seek acknowledgement from a very young age. Our certificates of recognition and ribbons of achievement hang proudly in our bedrooms, tangible evidence of key milestones and accomplishments in our academic and sporting endeavours.

Later in life and in business, our emotional response to recognition is no less potent. We may no longer blue-tack thank you cards and other adult forms of recognition certificates on the wall of our bedroom, but we still appreciate being appreciated.

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Implementing a milestone marketing program for your existing customers could be as simple as a welcome pack or thank you at the beginning of the relationship, followed by the acknowledgement of key milestones (anniversaries, spend level, tenure or another loyalty milestone – the options are endless).

Collaboration

In all its forms, collaboration will be a powerful strategy for businesses to achieve better return on each invested marketing dollar. I've outlined below some of the areas where collaboration matters most.

Collaborate with your staff — A culture of collaboration should start from the inside out. Whenever possible, your staff should be your greatest brand advocates. When they can see your business through the eyes of a customer, they will not only be more empathetic and considered in how they deal with other customers, they will be inspired to deliver exceptional customer service.

Aside from making your team members brand ambassadors, you can also make them your innovation partners. In fact, involving your staff and encouraging them to conceive new ways to up the ante on your customer service levels can be a brilliant ongoing team building exercise. Tying in some friendly rivalry and incentives can also be effective.

Collaborate with your customers — Many business owners don't truly know what their customers want or how they see their brand, simply because they never ask them!

Appointing a customer advisory board is one of the most simple, cost-effective ways to collaborate with your customers and see your business from their perspective. They will not only give you honest answers and fresh ideas, they will value and appreciate that you asked their opinion in the first place.

Establishing an advisory board is a matter of five simple steps:

1. Recruit a panel of around a dozen customers or clients who are representative of your target audience.
2. Source an independent facilitator who can lead and moderate the meetings (using someone with no involvement in your business removes any bias and you'll get much more honest insights).
3. Have clear, long-term objectives for the program, as well as a set agenda for each meeting.
4. Feed outcomes back to the group throughout the advisory board program. The group will be more motivated to develop new ideas and strategies if they can see that their opinions and ideas are having an impact.
5. Reward participants. Ensure they feel valued and validated. They will not only leave the program feeling like their opinions matter, they will be vocal brand advocates.

Collaborate with complementary businesses — One answer to bolstering your customer advocacy might exist with another brand seemingly unrelated to yours, in the form of a Joint Venture (JV) marketing campaign. It enables you to leverage the assets of another, non-competing brand to deliver high perceived value to your customers, at little or zero cost to you.

Joint Venture Marketing is a strategy used by some of the most profitable companies. In fact, McDonald's and Disney easily hold the record for the longest running, most profitable joint venture marketing agreement in history. For decades, the iconic McDonald's Happy Meal, a product purchased predominantly for children more than a hundred million times a year globally, has been the JV vehicle for Disney's newly-released movies.

By partnering with McDonald's, Disney provides the toy figurines that add value to the Happy Meal. These trinkets put the current Disney blockbuster top-of-mind for their target audience.

Here are some examples of other joint venture marketing campaigns:

1. A real estate agent promotes their services to the members of a local football club, offering a rebate to the club on each property sale (fundraising JV)
2. A gift-with-purchase that you provide to your JV partner for them to gift to their VIP customers (gift promotion JV)
3. A business consultant provides a free copy of their book to an accountant's clients (information-based JV)
4. A special membership package is available exclusively to your JV partner's customers (exclusive access JV)

As you can see, the format of the JV is limited only by your imagination.

The key is striking up a mutually-beneficial arrangement that enables you to either tap into a new database of customers and/or add value to your existing customers without it costing you what it's actually worth.

Collaborate with your competition — Say what?! Collaborate with your opposition? Yes, if it's in the best interests of your customer. Referring them to a competitor if you can't provide the product or service they're after, then doing your best to ensure they get what they need (even if it means losing the sale) will potentially turn a non-customer into an advocate. If you're lucky, the law of reciprocity says that your competitors might just do the same.

Remember, sometimes your greatest advocates will be people who aren't your customers. Yet.

Also, if you're not rewarding referrals, now's the time to start. A simple thank you gift to demonstrate you appreciate a customer going out of their way to entrust a friend or family member to you and your business.

As humans we are wired to repeat behaviour that we are rewarded for. So reward, recognise and watch your customer loyalty and referrals increase.

Free BONUS GIFT

Amanda Stevens has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$24.95 to all readers of this book.

Turning Customers Into Advocates — What if your greatest untapped marketing asset is lying dormant within your business? This ebook by Amanda Stevens outlines the ten-step process for creating raving fans. Within days, your existing customers could become walking advertisements for your business. You'll also learn how to create a stream of new buyers who are carbon-copies of your best customers.

Simply visit the web page below and follow the directions to download:

www.SecretsExposed.com.au/business-experts

SPECIALISED GROWTH



SAMUEL JUNGHENN

“ Typically, 60 to 70 per cent of your marketing will suck. 20 to 30 per cent of it will be okay and five to ten per cent will smash you out of the park, producing amazing return on investment. ”

Samuel Junghehn

SAMUEL JUNGHENN

Growing up on a farm in Victoria, Samuel Junghenn's first entrepreneurial venture was a self-managed egg business at the age of 12. After successfully earning more pocket money than most kids need, he decided to start a snowboard importing business at age 17.

Samuel was drawn to the world of digital marketing and it quickly became his new passion. The ongoing shifts in the field offered a stimulating environment and with a quick mind for data and statistics, Samuel built up a successful business with multiple streams of revenue.

After privately coaching a few students, Samuel started Think Big Online, a full service marketing agency. Here, Samuel could help business owners implement the very strategies that were working for him. Think Big Online specialises in helping businesses integrate their marketing efforts into a single stream, creating massive leverage and results.

Under Samuel's leadership, Think Big Online has acquired an enviable list of clients and grown to a team of 30 staff. This includes specialists in specific areas of digital marketing, from search engine and social media marketing to content marketing and automation.

Samuel is dedicated to helping business owners achieve the next level of success. What sets him apart is the ability to simplify complex digital marketing concepts and create systems which can be quickly deployed to generate quantifiable results. Think Big Online's unfailing commitment to tracking, testing and obtaining detailed insights into campaign performance delivers levels of success which are among the best for digital marketing agencies in Australia.

When did you or your family first discover a passion for business?

As far back as I can remember, my family has always been in business for themselves. My parents and my grandparents were business owners. Even my great grandparents had one of the first furniture and electrical stores in Australia.

It must be in my blood because I can remember being a ten-year-old kid and drawing up maps of how I was going to build a theme park. I figured out how much I would charge people to come in the gates, who would work there and what rides they could go on.

What was your very first significant job and what did it teach you?

My first job was working on the farm that I grew up on as a kid. I remember going out to work with Dad from the age of six. I think I was paid about 20 cents a day but it taught me about money and that if I did something for someone else I could earn it. These days they would probably call it child labour!

I was 12 when I made my first effort at running a business. I saved up all my pocket money from working on the farm and bought 30 chickens. I helped build a chicken hutch to put them in and I used to try to sell the eggs to neighbours and local restaurants.

I worked out the cost of buying feed and that a chicken would only lay an egg for six days in a row, before having a rest on the seventh day. I figured out that I could get 180 eggs per week from 30 chickens. From those 180 eggs, I could get 12 full cartons. It was all a good experience and I learned lots of lessons about how to deal with expenses and handling money coming in. Then I learned a big lesson.

“ The fox took one chicken per night until I was out of business with an empty hutch. ”

A fox soon figured out that I had a juicy bundle of fresh meat waiting for it and slowly but surely my investment disappeared. The fox took one chicken per night until I was out of business with an empty hutch.

This taught me that you can create something from nothing and that you can also lose everything quite quickly if you don't keep your finger on the pulse.

What made you decide to start your current business?

I decided to start Think Big Online because I'm really passionate about growing businesses. I think it's the most amazing thing to run advertising online and increase sales in a business, while tracking every dollar.

I wanted to build something that was unique and served as a one-stop shop for any business wanting to grow. It's taken a long time to do that, but over the last ten years, I've built something that's rock solid and consistently delivers results to our clients.

I still love seeing the 'before' picture of when businesses come to us and the 'afters' when they grow and succeed.

What are two or three notable success stories of clients that you've worked with?

One of my early clients was from a blinds and shutters company. When I first met them, they had a terrible website that someone internally had tried to build and they weren't really doing any advertising online. They were just doing local print ads.

They were generating about \$40,000 to \$50,000 per month in revenue. I followed them up 13 times before getting a meeting with the owner. I sat down with the owner and walked through what we could do and how it would benefit them, and he finally agreed to let me help him.

We then went on this business journey together. Over the last few years, that business has grown to more than \$1 million in revenue a month.

Another success story is that of an education company. They came to us after trying out three or four other ad agencies. None of them had been able to make their Google Ads profitable.

They approached us with a small budget. Back then, I think it was \$900 per month. We took that small budget, focused in on the people we wanted to attract and built the campaign up to spending \$90,000 per month within 15 months.

By using the process of testing and measuring everything we did, we knew for every dollar we spent, exactly how much we were getting back. When we achieved higher returns, we would ask the owner to increase the budget. This would harness an even better return.

We would repeat the process until we got up to \$90,000 per month in ad spend and achieved a great return on investment. It was quite a significant change to go from spending \$900 per month where no one else could get their advertising to be profitable, to spending \$90,000 per month, within a span of 15 months.

When did you start learning about digital marketing?

Back in 1998, when the internet was still really new in Australia, I heard about these people making money online. They were able to promote things worldwide and it was like opening the door to a brand

new world where you could trade with anyone from anywhere. This was around the time a website called Amazon got started.

At this point in time, the internet was so brand new that when I told anyone how I was going to start a business online make money on the internet I didn't quite get the reaction I hoped for.

What do you think all my friends and family said? They said, "You're crazy."

"You're going to lose your money."

"The internet, it's just another one of those fads."

"It's a scam."

"This internet thing, it's never going to stick around."

After about three or four months, I gave up on my dream of becoming an internet millionaire. I started and managed various other businesses for many years. I still learned a little about the internet and how to do basic advertising online, but it was by no means a full-time gig, it was more like a hobby.

That was until about 2008 when I came to Sydney for some personal development events and happened to go to a multi-speaker event where they have 10 or 15 people speaking over the course of the weekend.

These people were talking about making money on the internet and promoting things online. I thought, "Wait a minute, that's what I was interested in 10 years ago." Sure enough, I went and did some courses and started to learn.

I took to it like a fish to water, it was just so natural for me. I guess the moral of the story is that you really need to listen to your intuition

and follow your heart. Follow your passion. If only I hadn't listened to everyone saying I shouldn't have gone for it from the beginning, I may be in a different place now.

I guess we see this all the time in business. It's because as entrepreneurs we have bigger, brighter visions of what can be.

Once I seriously got started online I just started absorbing as much information as I could. I would go to live events, I would attend webinars, I'd watch videos and work 16 to 18 hours, seven days a week because I was infatuated with this.

I was also \$105,000 in debt at 20.5 per cent after the GFC and so I backed myself 100 per cent and went for gold until it became second nature to me. Completely immersing myself in this online world helped me to progress very quickly in my learning and achieve results for myself and clients.

Do you believe that digital marketing is for all businesses or is it really just for some businesses?

Given the amount of ways you can target audiences online and the different platforms that are out there now, there's really no reason why every business should not have some sort of digital marketing in the mix. It doesn't matter if you're manufacturing car lug nuts.

Research has shown that 74 per cent of people will look you up online before doing business with you, even if they already know about you. What this means is, if you go and you meet someone at a networking event, or run TV advertising, radio, print, three-quarters of these people will go and look you up online before they actually do business with you.

If they look you up online and they don't find your business, what does that say about you? It might say you are not willing to invest

to have a proper presence and to present yourself well. If that's the case, where else are you cutting costs?

At bare minimum, you should have your own website for the business with basic information and core values. Your website should share your unique selling proposition and explain why people should do business with you.

I still see websites come across my desk that were built ten years ago and they look shocking. It's like having a storefront with windows that have graffiti all over them, one window smashed in, the doors hanging on the last hinge and the handles falling out. Are you really expecting people to come and do business with you?

There's really no excuse these days for not making a small investment in a decent website. You could have someone build you a basic, really nice looking website with some decent content on there for peanuts.

What if you don't have a presence at all? Well, that's simple. Your customers will find your competitors instead.

In your opinion, what are the essential ingredients of a great digital marketing strategy?

Typically, people go out and look at the tactics first. They say, "My friend does Facebook advertising and it's really good. You should see how many likes they got. I want to do Facebook ads too."

Or they think, "Google advertising is the best place to advertise. That's what I heard from someone at a networking event. I should do that too," when nothing could be further from the truth.

What successful digital marketing comes down to is a handful of things. It doesn't matter which platform you're on, whether it's Facebook ads, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, the list goes

on. What it comes down to is having a really well-defined audience you can place an irresistible offer in front of.

To demonstrate how important it is to have a really well defined audience, sometimes I use the analogy of selling ice to Eskimos.

Let's say you have a 10 kilogram bag of ice and you go to Antarctica and try to sell it. You offer a discount, throw in bonuses and say, "Today only special! I'm going to give you 90 per cent off and I'm going to throw in these bonuses." You jump up and down with an obnoxious red and yellow sign. That's not going to get more people to buy ice.

If, on the other hand, you go out in the middle of the desert and you see a bus that's broken down with 45 tourists who haven't had a drink for five days in 40-degree heat, I guarantee you, you'll be able to sell that same 10 kilogram bag of ice for \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100,000. In this situation, you're targeting the right audience.

Your audience is the number one determinant of how successful your campaigns are going to be. If you can't access the right audience, no matter how good your offer is, how good your ads are, how good your copywriting is, or how good your videos are, your campaigns are never going to be successful.

The second point is the offer. If you have the right audience, but the wrong offer, then it's still not going to work.

I think about marketing like unlocking the combination to the combination lock. Imagine you're unlocking a safe and you need four numbers. If you get three of the numbers right, and not the fourth one, you don't get 75 per cent of the gold that's in the vault. You get nothing.

“ If you have the right audience, but the wrong offer, then it's still not going to work. ”

“ Your offer needs to stand out, it needs to be unique and it needs to add massive value. ”

It's the same with your advertising. Sometimes, you can get lucky, but pretty much all the time, you have to unlock all of the numbers to the combination lock to make your advertising work.

What do I mean by an offer? An offer could be a free consultation. It could be a particular product that you're selling online. It could be a particular service or it could be technology that you're selling but the offer needs to be right.

If your offer is to buy a 60-inch TV and you're 20 per cent more expensive than the next person, that's not a great offer. You would be surprised at how many businesses we see spending money online effectively promoting their competitors because no one is ever going to buy from them.

If your offer is exactly at same price as every other person offering that product or service in the market and it looks exactly the same as everyone else's, it's never going to work. Your offer needs to stand out, it needs to be unique and it needs to add massive value to the audience that you're targeting. The offer and the audience need to be really closely aligned for it to take off and really be a successful campaign.

The follow-up is most important after this. How are you going to follow-up prospects who do not buy from you and get them to purchase? From there, how are you following up existing customers to get them to come back and purchase more often?

I see so many people spend a lot of time, energy and money on their advertising to get the right ads to get leads in the door. The problem is they're so focused on bringing more leads in that they don't focus on following up people they already have.

This is where you're going to win around 70 per cent of the battle. I've followed up some prospects for three years before they became customers. I kept adding value by providing insightful content to them until one day, they said, "Now is the right time to buy."

Last and certainly not the least part of your strategy is that you must have a means for testing and measuring your ad campaigns in place. You'll need to know your numbers from the start and have the right measurements in place to measure the success of the campaign. You also need to know which parts of the campaign are working and which parts of the campaign are not working so you can modify and change it to something that produces a result.

A lot of the time, we see people run ineffective campaigns. They might run a campaign on Facebook and find it doesn't work but they didn't bother measuring each step of the process so they never know why it failed.

These are the questions you need to know the answers to:

1. How many people clicked through to the website?
2. How many people convert to a lead?
3. How many of those leads actually get on the phone for you to have a conversation with?
4. How many of the leads that you got on the phone bought something?
5. Out of the people who didn't buy, how many people did you follow up? How many times?
6. Out of those people who you followed up with, how many people bought and how many people didn't buy?

There are many points in the customer journey that you can optimise and this is why testing and measuring is absolutely crucial to the success of any good strategy.

At the end of the day, what I can tell you for sure is no one can ever get marketing 100 per cent right, 100 per cent of the time. Typically, 60 to 70 per cent of your marketing will suck. 20 to 30 per cent of it will be okay and five to ten per cent will smash you out of the park, producing amazing return on investment.

The only way you will ever know which the five to ten per cent part is, is by tracking and testing.

The difference between good marketing and amazing marketing is the people who track their results can identify which five to ten per cent is producing a massive return on investment. They can discard everything that's not working and focus on what works really well.

How do you recommend a business owner puts together a digital marketing strategy?

The first thing required before piecing together a digital marketing strategy is to know your numbers inside out and back to front. Without knowing your numbers, you're not going to know if your strategy is working or not.

To make this really easy, I've recorded a video that walks you through the steps on how to get clear on your numbers. I've also prepared a worksheet to explain this and you can download both of these from my website: www.SamuelJunghenn.com/downloads.

I've also put on that page a diagram of a funnel that shows you where each online marketing platform sits in the customer journey. Typically, when we work with small to medium businesses, we look at

the pointy end of the funnel. This is where people have their credit card out ready to buy.

If you start at the top end, “awareness” end of the funnel, it takes people time to move through awareness, consideration, evaluation and down to the purchase section. We work backwards from the purchase section to evaluation, up to the consideration and then focus on creating more awareness for the product.

This will help generate cash flow in the business and allow you to grow much faster than anyone who’s focusing their spending on the awareness section. Once you’ve had a look at that funnel and decided where you want to target people, you need to figure out if you can reach your target audience on that platform. Whether it’s Facebook, Instagram, Google Ads Search, Google Display, YouTube, LinkedIn, etcetera, can you absolutely, definitely find those people on the platform and get in front of them?

What questions do you ask your clients when helping them with their digital marketing?

The first thing that we ask when potentially going to work with a client is, “Do the numbers in your business make sense?”

Do we believe we can actually acquire new customers at less than what they’re worth to the business? It’s basically the whole process that I mentioned earlier and I’ve uploaded this on my website.

Once we’re clear on the numbers and know that it makes sense, we look at the audience. Who are they? Where are they? Who are the best audiences to target as in who will be the lowest hanging fruit? Who is going to give the client the most money? Who will be the easiest clients to deal with and

“ Once we’re clear on the numbers and know that it makes sense, we look at the audience. ”

which customers can we add the most value to? The ones who we can add the most value to are typically going to be the ones that are going to buy the product or the service most readily.

There are so many different things you can do in terms of digital marketing. What place do you recommend people start?

Start with the basics. When you're building a house, you don't start building the roof, you start with laying the slab and building the foundations. The foundations when it comes to digital marketing are making sure your website is up to scratch.

Your website should load quickly, it should have compelling information on there and it should be up to date. You should be updating your website at least once every two years, if not every year to make sure that it's current with the latest design trends and is fresh because your target market will often shift over this time.

Once your website is sorted, you want to look at the main social channels for your type of business. If you're in a B2B type business, LinkedIn is probably the first profile you want to set up for your company.

If you've got more aesthetic products, maybe you want to set up on Instagram first.

However, just because all these channels are available to you doesn't mean you need to go and set up a profile on every single one. Only set up the ones you're prepared to invest time in maintaining.

It looks bad when businesses have social media accounts that haven't been updated for ages. You're much better off having one active social media account that sits alongside and complements your website, rather than having an account on every single platform and never using them.

Most people these days have a website but how does a business owner know if theirs is any good?

This one is really simple. The easiest way to do this is to go and search on Google for the terms that your customers would search if they were looking for your business. Go and see who's advertising and see who comes up in your organic listings and take a look at their websites. If their websites are absolutely amazing, you want to use them as a benchmark and compare them to yours.

On the other hand, these websites may appear poorly designed, look like they've been built ten years ago, have broken images and just don't look good. It's still no excuse for not having a good looking website that gives people what they want in a timely fashion.

You will also want to compare your content to the competition. Maybe refer your site and some competitor sites to someone who is unbiased and have them go through the content. Do your competitors have video on theirs? How's their design? Does the site load on mobile phones and tablets easily? What type of content are they putting out? Is it easy to navigate? Do they have live chat?

Remember, it's not the advertising that wins the war. Advertising wins the battle, but it's the website where people ultimately decide whether they are going to pick up the phone and call you.

What are the six things a website must have?

1. To start with, your website must have a clear and compelling headline on every single page and be supported with great copy throughout the page. People think it's good enough to just put up nice images and customers are going to come and buy from you. I can tell you that the stats don't lie and I've seen tons of data on this. If you have a website that just has a few images and some

abstract words on it, it might look nice and feel good but you're never going to sell anything. It's the copy that inspires people to do business with you, pulls them in closer and makes them want to know more. Images make them feel good, warm and fuzzy, but it's the text that's going to get them to take action.

2. You must have some way for your website visitors to learn more about your business without having to speak to someone. This could be via a webinar, ebook or video series. What can you give your customers to help them along the journey without them having to talk to someone or pull out their credit card? Too often, people make the assumption that just because visitors go to your website, they're going to be ready to buy right now. In reality, they could be way up in the funnel. They could have just heard about your product or service and not have a need for it for the next six months. Statistics show that around three per cent of all visitors who come to your website will engage with you in some way. What about the other 97 per cent you never hear from? Get them on to your database or on your messenger platform by giving them a snippet of valuable content, like something for free. You've now got permission to contact them so that when they're ready to purchase, you have stayed top-of-mind and they're more likely to come back to you.
3. In this day and age, your website must be mobile friendly first. We've passed the tipping point where websites are now receiving more traffic from mobile phones and tablets than they are from desktop computers. In the next five to seven years, we're going to see desktop computers fade away. We're only going to be using mobiles, tablets and other devices.
4. Your website must load fast. We are in an age where people have the lowest attention spans that we've ever seen in the entire history of the human race. Our attention spans have been recorded to be lower than a goldfish now. We're also in an age where people want instant gratification. If they click on your website and it doesn't load instantly, they're clicking that 'back' button. Up to 50 to 80 per cent of your advertising budget is wasted if you have a slow

loading website. This is why one of the first steps we take is to optimise our client websites for maximum speed. To give you an idea, Fast Company indicated that a one second page load delay could result in a \$1.6 billion loss in sales for Amazon.

5. Very basic, but we still see so many websites without this. You want to have a phone number that's accessible on every single page of the website. Don't make your customers have to find your contact page and click through to get the details. It's like having a retail shop then playing hide-and-seek when you see someone walk in the door. Stick your phone number in the header and footer of every page on your website. You'll be surprised how much your response rates increase.
6. Live Chat. Aside from the agency, I own a number of different eCommerce sites and one of the first things I said to my team is that we must have Live Chat on all our sites. We installed Live Chat on a brand new website and received an incredible amount of feedback detailing what people would like to see on the website and what sort of products they want. Through Live Chat, we have found out when the checkout is broken and when discount codes don't work. We have also been notified when the site doesn't load properly on some devices. Keep in mind, we build websites so we do cover all these things in the testing process before launch, but there are millions of combinations of how people are viewing the website. Different devices, different models of devices, different browsers and different internet connections all have the potential to produce a different user experience. All this feedback has helped us build really strong businesses thanks to this easily accessible tool. The other hidden benefit is people don't always want to get on the phone to speak with you and they don't want to wait up to 24 or 48 hours to get a reply to their email. If they can click a chat button and chat to someone quickly, they'll be more likely to engage. Consider that many people are browsing online while they're at work and they probably don't want their boss to know that they're on your website. They're more likely to use a Live Chat than they are to pick up the phone during working hours.

What about landing pages? Do you think all businesses need one?

I don't think all businesses need a landing page. Aside from landing pages, there are webinars, ebooks, video series, survey funnels and a whole range of online marketing tactics, which can be utilised to generate more leads online. At the end of the day, not everything works for everyone, all the time.

While landing pages can be really effective when done well, many times I have seen a full website convert better than a good landing page, so I wouldn't say that every business needs one. Where they can become really effective is when you're driving paid traffic to a page with a compelling offer.

The purpose of a landing page is to avoid website visitors getting sidetracked and going around to all the different pages and then leaving. You want to give them as much information as they need to make a decision to contact you or to buy the things that you're advertising on that one page.

If you can do that, you can now shortcut the journey that people are going to take between landing on the page and taking the desired action you want. Landing pages can be really powerful for this reason but they need to have a compelling offer to be effective.

What percentage of marketing budget should a business spend on digital marketing compared to non-digital marketing channels?

That's an interesting question. I think about marketing budgets very differently to most people. Typically, companies will set an annual marketing budget or a quarterly marketing budget. Say you've got \$50,000 to spend for the quarter or you've got \$50,000 to spend for the year and that's your budget. If we're tracking and measuring all

of our return on investment, we know what's not working and what's producing a return on investment.

If you're spending \$1 and are getting \$10 back, why would you limit that? Why set a budget when all it does is cap how much you can grow by?

When it comes to the question of what percentage of your marketing budget should be spent on digital compared to non-digital, we shouldn't be spending money on either if we're not getting a return on investment.

The way that I look at it is, you want to allocate a good enough test budget for a campaign to know which parts work and which don't.

For example, if you're running TV advertising and you're spending a million dollars and getting \$20 million back in sales, you should absolutely keep spending as much as you can while maintaining that return on investment.

On the other hand, if you're spending \$10,000 on your digital advertising and you're getting \$100 back, you should stop doing that or find someone that has a better track record. This principle should be applied to every type of advertising medium, whether it's digital or non-digital.

Do you recommend people manage their own digital marketing or hire an agency?

We have about 30 staff in our agency and only a handful of them are generalists. These are client account managers. Everyone else is a specialist at what they do. The Facebook team does Facebook ads all day long. The

“ Why set a budget when all it does is cap how much you can grow by? ”

Google Ads team exclusively runs profitable Google Ads campaigns. The same goes for YouTube, SEO, copywriting and automation.

It's not wise to think you can do a short course, set up some ads and compete with other specialists who have years of experience. I'm not just talking about my business, there are thousands of other advertising agencies out there. They all know the platforms like the back of their hand and see millions of dollars being spent so they can test more than you and have a huge advantage.

Anyone can set up an account and put some ads in it, even my eight-year-old nephew, but he doesn't have a chance at making it profitable. There are literally millions of combinations of settings and types of ads you can use. Profitability is the difference between knowing which combinations work and which don't.

Unless you have a significant amount of time (15-20 hours a week) to learn how to market on one particular platform, I don't suggest doing your marketing yourself because you will be at a significant disadvantage right from the start.

Now, I realise some people reading this book may be small business owners who are in business by themselves. It's not feasible for them to hire a digital marketing agency so where do they start?

What I suggest they do is identify which platform is going to most likely work for their product or service (not what they think would be fun). Then go and buy three different courses online and learn as much as they can about that platform inside and out and really study how to use that.

They should join a quality forum where they will get coaching on using that particular platform to get a result. That's where they should start, but ultimately they want to be delegating tasks to other people who specialise in certain areas while they focus on their own area of genius.

What are your top tips for turning more online visitors into leads and sales?

The first step is to focus your messaging around a single target market. You need to craft your videos, your images, your text around a single person or avatar.

Avatars define the average age, gender, financial status, geographic and other demographic attributes of your ideal customer. What are their psychographic attributes? Do they have kids? Are they married? Are they divorced? Are they widowed? Are they gay? Are they straight? Which nationality are they? Do they have a religion?

You should have all of these listed out and then you can craft the perfect message to be delivered to a single target market. Now, this does not mean you should only target one market. What it means is you're just starting with one market and talking to those specific people to solve their specific problem.

Your marketing will be infinitely more profitable if you take the time to do this. Once you get this right and it's working really well, focus your messaging around a different target market and run ads to those particular people. Once you're successful, repeat the process over and over again.

Second, stand out and be different. Not just a little bit different. You need to be head and shoulders above the rest. If you want to stand out in a market, you need to make people's eyes open and really notice the difference between you and the competitors. Then it makes it a really easy decision who they should go with.

“ The first step is to focus your messaging around a single target market. You need to craft your videos, your images, your text around a single person or avatar. ”

“ Your marketing will be infinitely more profitable if you take the time to do this. ”

Your marketing is not out there to make everyone like you. If you go out and try to appeal to everyone, you're not going to get any results. Good marketing should both compel and repel people.

You should be repelling people who you don't want to do business with and you want to be compelling to your ideal customers. These are the ones who are going to pay you the most money for solving the problem that is easiest for you to solve.

Next, you want to create amazing, actionable content. The content that you put out on your social media channels, on Facebook, on YouTube, LinkedIn and on your website should be content that gives people 'aha' moments.

This is how you're going to add the most value to people and be remembered. When you're the most remembered business, even if these people don't buy from you, they will refer other people and say, "You should go see Joe Bloggs because they are the expert at X, Y, Z."

Finally, you must have a follow-up system in place that continues to keep in contact with prospects. I'm going to talk about CRMs in a moment and where we see a lot of money being left on the table.

How important is a good CRM system in your strategy?

The average sales cycle has increased 22 per cent over the last five years, due to more decision-makers being involved in the process and more competition in the market.

Nurtured leads make 47 per cent larger purchases than non-nurtured leads.

Companies which excel at lead nurturing generate 50 per cent more sales related leads at 33 per cent lower cost than companies which don't.

What do all these statistics point to? The obvious. They point to the fact that you absolutely must have a CRM system with an automated follow-up process in place.

People are taking longer to make decisions. The business environment has become more competitive and we need to stay top-of-mind, constantly adding value and standing out over and above everyone else.

Taking people from the internet into your CRM is like having a sales conversation in a crowded room, versus having an intimate conversation with a prospect in a private room. In this situation, it's just you and them discussing the thing that they're looking to purchase.

To answer the question, "How important a good CRM system is to your overall strategy?" It's absolutely vital.

Do you have any recommendations for choosing a CRM?

We've worked with over a dozen different CRMs over the years and implemented them in our own businesses and in client's businesses.

We boiled it down to two main CRMs. The first one is ActiveCampaign, which is for smaller businesses that have a handful of employees.

They know they need to keep their data clean and they need to keep in contact with people, but they only have a small database of fewer than 10,000 people.

For companies that have over 10,000 people on their database and want to process payments online, typically Infusionsoft is the better solution. It's much more sophisticated and more robust and will scale the business to any level.

Both of these CRMs have basic and advanced functions. Most importantly, they also allow automated marketing messages to go out based on the user's level of engagement once you have them in your database.

For example, if someone has bought a brown pair of shoes from your website, you don't want to send them an email getting them to buy that same brown pair of shoes again.

You want to send them an offer for something that might be complementary to the product or service that they purchased. You don't want to send the same email to everyone. You want to use a CRM that's smart and capable of sending segmented messages to people based on the behaviour they exhibit.

For example, a person who buys the brown shoes gets email A. The person who buys the red shoes gets email B. The person who buys both the brown and red shoes gets email C.

In the near future, how do you think technology will affect your business?

Even though my business is in the digital space, we're not immune to these massive changes. I think over the next few years we're going to see many agencies like ours die out.

They are going to be replaced with artificial intelligence (AI) that can write and create ads and sales funnels for businesses. Bigger platforms are going to emerge, which will automatically deliver new customers to businesses and will be paid on performance. My business is already

thinking about how to adapt and potentially build our own technology to remain a leader in this space.

Over the next ten years, where do you see the major opportunities for businesses?

Right now, there's a massive shift happening with technology and financial structures around the world. Cryptocurrencies are completely changing the landscape and we're going to see many big financial institutions crumble over the next ten years. We're potentially going to see governments crumble as well because of these shifts.

There's a huge opportunity for fast movers and innovative thinkers around the cryptocurrency space. There's also a huge opportunity in deep learning and artificial intelligence. My guess is we're going to see a lot of people being put out of work by automation and AI over the next decade. This doesn't have to be the physical robots either. This can be automation in the sense of software programmes that can do what humans are doing.

For example, there are law firms in the US who are not hiring any new staff. They already have software that can read and write contracts for them without needing to pay someone to manually sit and write them out. This software doesn't take sick days or complain when it doesn't get its way. It can work 24/7, without having to be paid penalty rates.

We are looking at a future where doctors are going to be required by law to consult with artificial intelligence before they make a diagnosis. This is just the tip of the iceberg but also where the huge opportunities are for many businesses. The ones that adapt the technology or invent the technology over the next ten years are going to gain significant ground on those that don't. In turn, those that don't adapt fast enough will be out of business.

Look what Uber has done to the taxi industry. Now Uber drivers are about to be put out of a job in the coming years by self-driving cars.

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CULTURE CODE



MICHAEL HENDERSON

“ Many businesses, for example, don't realise that company culture has been proven to be on average eight times more influential to an organisation's performance variables, than its strategy. ”

M Henderson

MICHAEL HENDERSON

Michael Henderson was born in England and spent his early childhood in a small agricultural town on the border of Wales. From an early age, Michael developed a fascination for human cultures.

After moving to South Africa, Michael was exposed to both multiple African and European cultures. A few years later the family moved again, this time to New Zealand where Michael was introduced to Maori culture and traditions.

Michael's fascination with culture lead him to study cultural anthropology at university. After graduating, he travelled for five years throughout Africa and South America, observing, studying and participating in a wide variety of cultures.

After his travels, Michael returned to the UK to work as a sales representative in the advertising industry. It was during this time that he realised modern organisations had worse cultures than nearly all the tribes he had visited in his travels. He returned to New Zealand to work as a business coach and trainer, noting that many company cultures in New Zealand were also poorly understood and structured.

In 1995, with the encouragement of his wife, Michael set up his business practice Cultures AT Work, offering culture education and advisory services to organisations around the world.

Since then, Michael has gained a vast amount of experience through his involvement in over 300 culture alignment, culture change and culture enhancement projects. His comprehensive knowledge and insights inform the books Michael has written and are the basis of his keynote speeches and business culture education programs.

Michael is married with three adult children. He and his wife still live in New Zealand and travel extensively. Michael is an avid reader and has a wide-ranging music collection that reflects his worldly perspective and passion for culture.

What was your very first significant job and what did it teach you?

I worked in a variety of retail outlets during holiday breaks when I was at college and university. I learnt very quickly that even a well organised business with excellent internal systems and awesome products will underperform if it doesn't know how to connect with people effectively.

By people, I mean both staff and the customers. Organisations that don't know how to connect with and effectively interpret people's needs and emotions stagnate and never optimise. These early jobs taught me that the interpersonal aspects of business are a significant and regularly underestimated factor.

What led you to study Corporate Anthropology?

At a very early age, I became aware that there is more than one way of being human. I think I also became aware that the culture we are born into isn't the only culture, the best culture or even the right culture.

I spent my early childhood in a small agricultural town in England, on the banks of the river Severn. Just across the river is Wales. Every Saturday morning, Welsh farmers would bring their produce and livestock across the river to the town markets. This early exposure to another culture and the possibility of being human through the expression of different culture was mind blowing, fascinating, and seemed to offer a wonderful possibility of adventure. I was intrigued that just across the bridge lived people who spoke a different language, who had a different view of life and who apparently believed in dragons (the dragon is the Welsh national symbol). As a kid, I thought believing in dragons was really cool. I wondered why my English culture didn't believe and was therefore missing out on an exciting experience.

“ I think I have been an anthropologist by nature since childhood. ”

Several years later, my family moved to South Africa. Living there, I was exposed to many Bantu tribal cultures and in particular the Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi and Mtebele tribes. There was also the local white tribe, the Afrikaners, plus the nation's large Indian community.

By the age of eight, I was very aware of this concept of culture that all human beings all around the world seemed to use to commune and socialise together. At the same time, culture seemed to also be the very way and even the preferred way for people to best define and distinguish our differences from one another.

I found this fascinating and stimulating. My time in South Africa occurred during the apartheid years so I also saw first hand the role culture played when it became insulated, afraid, arrogant, and considered itself superior to other cultures. In later years, this experience of the fear and arrogance that culture can use to isolate itself from others has proved to be a useful background to draw upon when working to dismantle silo mentality or arrogance in company cultures.

All these experiences of culture occurred long before I had even heard of the subject of anthropology. Once I enrolled at university, anthropology was initially just one of seven subjects I studied. I had no idea what I wanted to major in or even what I really wanted to do with my life.

While studying anthropology, something just clicked. I'm convinced my childhood travelling experiences and having lived in several countries and cultures other than my own enabled me to 'get' anthropology beyond an academic understanding.

I think I have been an anthropologist by nature since childhood. The university degree just made things official.

Tell us about your early career. What were your major achievements?

After graduating with a degree in anthropology I worked in several commission-only sales roles, selling advertising in London. My initial sales performance and results were terrible. Being commission only meant my mates had to help me out with rent and food bills regularly during this time.

I didn't feel comfortable with the sales techniques I had been taught. They required me to go through a very structured series of questions that were designed to draw the customer into feeling vulnerable and at risk. From there, we positioned our products as the cavalry that would come riding to their rescue, if only they would sign on the bottom line. I hated the approach so I was hesitant in my sales process. This affected my results and earnings, which in turn affected my confidence.

On one particularly bad day, it dawned on me that I was placing all of my attention on how much I disliked our products, our pricing, and the sales system. I realised that my training in anthropology had equipped me to do the exact opposite. I should have been focussed on the people, rather than the method. I decided to think of my customers as tribe members who I was studying and immediately I became genuinely interested in their thoughts, their beliefs, their perspectives and their view of the world. Replacing the sales process with my innate curiosity about who these people were and what they thought immediately changed the tone of the conversations. I really began to connect with the customers and, surprise, surprise, my sales soared.

The difference was incredible. Over four weeks, I went from being rated the second worst sales rep (out of thirty-six in our team) to becoming the third best. The only change was becoming aware of a performance dynamic that needed to be adjusted. This taught me a very valuable lesson that I still use today to teach my clients.

Who was your biggest business mentor? What important lessons have you learnt from them?

He is not a business mentor as such, but my dear friend Matt Church, the founder of Thought Leaders Business School, was invaluable in helping me learn how to explain what I know about culture to business people. As an anthropologist, I have a very comprehensive knowledge of culture, but teaching others how to see and work with culture is a separate skill and one that I hadn't truly mastered before meeting Matt.

Matt is a genius at supporting subject matter experts and helping them to organise their knowledge in a user-friendly manner. His guidance has been a game changer. I have been able to translate my knowledge and experience of high performance cultures into an accessible and usable language that my customers can quickly grasp and apply.

Describe to us the work that you do and the value it provides to your clients.

The main focus of my work is teaching organisations that they cannot outperform their culture! Although I write books and articles and speak at conferences about the pathway to creating a high-performance culture, my main focus is in teaching a twelve month in-house culture education program. This is designed for organisations that are truly committed to optimising their workplace culture.

In my experience, far too many organisations just don't understand enough about culture to know how to optimise it for their business. Many businesses, for example, don't realise that company culture has been proven to be on average eight times more influential to an organisation's performance variables than its strategy. Understanding this fact alone changes the appetite and time a senior leadership team will invest in culture compared to strategy.

I really feel for companies because they are unofficially evaluated on their culture every day by staff, customers and suppliers. Yet the vast majority of companies have never received any formal education or training on the performance dynamics of culture within a business. My research across multiple business sectors has shown that nine out of ten organisations have such a limited understanding that they are unable to accurately answer even some of the most fundamental questions regarding culture.

Listed below are 15 questions regarding the fundamental aspects of culture knowledge that any company aiming to create a high-performance culture would need to know. A useful exercise is to read through these questions and count as you go how many you believe your company could accurately answer. I believe any company that cannot answer accurately at least 12 of these 15 questions lacks enough understanding of culture to be able to make any real and tangible difference.

1. What is culture?
2. How does culture form?
3. How does culture function?
4. What two performance dynamics does every culture deliver?
5. Who owns culture?
6. Who really leads culture?
7. How is culture structured?
8. Why won't culture change when you want it to and can it change when you don't want it to?
9. How does culture align to strategy?
10. How is culture connected to brand and how does it either support or sabotage it?
11. Why is all cultural change always dependant on cultural structure?

12. Why can't an organisation successfully copy the culture of another?
13. Why don't engagement surveys measure culture?
14. What is the role of business leadership in regards to culture?
15. Why does culture determine your customer service levels more than any other factor?

What are some notable success stories of clients that you have worked with?

Z

I am immensely humbled to have played a small role in the incredible business success story that is Z in New Zealand.

Z is a standout example of a client who has got culture right. Eight years ago, Shell NZ was sold to a Kiwi superfund that went about reshaping and rebranding the business. At the time of the purchase, Shell Oil NZ was valued at NZ \$420 million. Seven years later the Z business is valued at NZ \$4 billion!

My brief with Z from day one of their launch was to educate the business to understand the role company culture plays in driving business performance, aligning culture to strategy, and having the business culture support brand expression and promise.

It is no small thing to replace a global brand with the stature and brand recognition of a giant like Shell and replace it with a new and untested brand and business, let alone to increase its value tenfold. What's more, Z achieved its first five year financial objectives in its first three years of operation. All this, while largely still selling the same product, at the same prices, to the same market as Shell.

It's an amazing story and a powerful example of what can be done when an organisation takes its culture seriously and understands the role company culture plays in driving business performance. Z is now

acknowledged as an employer of choice and ranks amongst the top ten brands in New Zealand, which for a fuel company is unheard of worldwide.

Huge credit for Z's success must go to CEO Mike Bennetts. First and foremost, he humbly credits his people. He also praises external partners such as myself and my team, his branding partners and his leadership development trainers.

Mike has made public statements regarding the success of Z, saying it would simply not have been possible without the culture that was created. That is not to say that culture alone was solely responsible for this incredible success. Brand leadership and the formation of strategy played extremely important roles. However, as Mike notes, brand and strategy are first dependent on culture.

In an industry where products and pricing were ubiquitous, Mike saw the triangle of strategy, brand and culture as the key to achieving the necessary differentiation required to succeed. He also saw how culture formed the foundation of that triangle. In other words, without a high-performance culture proving the underlying performance platform, the business strategy and brand were always going to be vulnerable. From day one, Mike and his senior leadership team have championed and involved themselves in developing and leading the culture at Z.

Z has over the past eight years repeatedly invited me to deliver the culture education programs to ensure that people at all levels of the business truly understand and respect the role culture has to play in driving business performance. Z even used my services when they recently acquired Chevron in New Zealand. They asked me to conduct a culture audit of themselves and Chevron as part of their due diligence. This was a smart move,

“ They asked me to conduct a culture audit of themselves and Chevron as part of their due diligence. ”

given how most business mergers and acquisitions fail to include culture as part of their due diligence and consequently many fail to deliver on their full potential.

The IT Team at 'Australian Bank'

This example isn't a company as such but rather a very large team of IT professionals based within one of Australia's largest banks. My contract with them restricts me from naming them and some of the particulars of the project outright. However, I'm so impressed with their efforts that I want to share what I can.

For an IT group, who from past experiences I have found slow to embrace a conversation about something they would describe as the 'soft and fluffy stuff' of culture, this group was fantastic.

My brief was to educate the group on the role and power of culture, supporting the group to enhance their performance and deliver on several specific KPIs.

Although, nowadays it is popular for many companies to work on their 'purpose' or their 'why', we discussed as part of the culture education program the more important aspect of identity. This is all about the 'who'. For any 'why' to be authentic and embraced by a group, it has to be a reflection of who the group see themselves as being in the world. We discussed being more than just IT or Information and Technology and explored the idea that they might benefit from thinking of themselves from a more expanded or creative sense.

During this project, we ran curiosity events to play with their sense of identity and asked for ideas about what else the letters IT could stand for as a sense of shaping or claiming a cultural identity. The responses were creative, fun and exciting. Suggested options included such things as Intelligent Thinking, Inspirational Technology, Inspired Thinking, Innovative Technology, Interconnecting Technology and many more.

This investigation caught the group's imagination and all I can report here is that when a very, very intelligent group of people who number 10,000 strong latch onto an idea, magic happens.

With this expanded sense of self to work from, the group continued to progress their way through the culture education program with an appetite for progress, change and success.

As a result, the group went on to achieve a record ten-point jump in their staff engagement scores, despite only targeting a two-point improvement. They set new records in regards to quality and systems maintenance. They also significantly altered their ability to collaborate with each other and as part of cross-discipline teams.

This team set a new record in IT project delivery and along with increased levels of performance they quickly attracted compliments from around the business. They began to receive invitations to share their learning and their journey with other departments and with colleagues based in other countries.

They transformed themselves from a group that had never actually utilised their culture to one that has embraced, embodied and empowered themselves to new levels of performance.

Coca-Cola Amatil NZ

Coca-Cola Amatil NZ had a CEO, a senior leadership team and an HR team that were committed to ensuring as many people as possible in the organisation understood the role and power of culture in a business.

I worked with this organisation on and off over several years to help educate people in the structure and function of culture. What they were able to achieve from their learning is a credit to the

“ They set new records in regards to quality and systems maintenance. ”

pride and passion that people at all levels of the organisation take in their work.

In short, their collective efforts on culture ended up saving 30 million dollars annually on their bottom line. This saving occurred as a result of the company simply shifting from operating with a business culture focused predominantly on efficiency to becoming a high-performance culture.

There was certainly nothing broken with the original culture but the leaders, managers and staff all sensed they were capable of more. They could feel it. They just didn't know how to access their own culture's power to ramp up its performance.

Once they had explored the nature of culture through the culture education program, there was no stopping them. They were eager to learn and equally willing to implement the ideas that were offered to them on the program.

Even though some more conservative staff were initially less than enthusiastic, after a few early and easily achieved runs on the board even these people really got in behind the culture journey. Their staff engagement scores leapt to new heights in many departments and the cost savings were highly impressive.

What is one of the funniest things that has ever happened to you in your business career?

I was once invited to visit a CEO of a company in Queensland after one of the company board members had heard me deliver a keynote. He felt this CEO could benefit from a discussion with me regarding the structure of company culture. Based on what he had heard me share in my talk, he said he thought the CEO didn't seem to grasp the importance of culture or how best to tap into its enormous power to influence performance.

I accepted the invitation and the meeting was set up. I arrived at the head office and waited outside the CEO's office in a small reception area. Eventually, she came storming out of her office and did not look happy to see me. She asked me rather accusingly, "Are you that anthropologist the board wants me to talk with?"

I said that yes I was. She frowned at me and then pointed to the wall to our left and in deep frustration declared, "I don't know why the board have sent you, we did culture last year, see, it's over there on the wall!" She was pointing to a vision and values statement on the wall. She then abruptly made her apologies and said she didn't have time to waste talking through something that had in her mind already been achieved.

I emailed the board member afterwards to explain that I had been unable to discuss culture with the CEO and shared her comments about doing culture last year. He emailed back with one word. "Wow!"

In your opinion, what do you believe separates good companies from great ones?

Leadership and culture. I've seen competing companies offering the similar product and services at similar price points to the same customer types in the same markets. The ones that win seem to be lead by passionate and capable leaders and supported by a culture of engaged and inspired people.

When aligned through culture to the business strategy and brand, passion and engagement is a winning formula. Great companies create this alignment between culture and performance. Good companies either don't or only do so out of a sense of compliance rather than commitment.

Great companies are authentic in their approach to culture. Good companies only do the bare minimum. With a great company you

feel different when you do business with them. With good companies, everything feels merely transactional and easily and quickly forgotten. With great companies, you never forget your interaction with them. It lingers as a pleasant and differentiating experience, which you can even recall years later.

What is company culture and why is it so important?

Company culture is the expression of what your people *care* most about together. The word culture comes from the latin root word for ‘*care*’. Culture is the source of your organisation’s commitment to quality, efficiency, service, standards, creativity and performance and growth.

It’s worth repeating this because many companies don’t seem to appreciate or acknowledge that culture is the source of an organisation’s performance. Failure to understand or see this means missing out on the opportunity to harness human beings’ innate capacity to care deeply about things within a work setting. Getting it right leads to an increase in productivity profit and performance.

Does company culture directly affect profitability?

There is conclusive evidence to show that culture absolutely impacts on the bottom line. Several comprehensive research projects in this area have demonstrated an aligned culture can make up to 400 per cent difference on the profits of an organisation. There are not too many other enhancements you can make to an organisation that can make that big a transformation to your bottom line.

As you read in the case studies of organisations I’ve supported, when you get culture aligned to your strategy and brand, the impact can lead to tens of millions of dollars being added to the business.

In your experience, what are the most common mistakes organisations make with their culture?

1. Underestimating the role culture is currently playing in terms of influencing your business performance, productivity levels, safety record, customer experience and profitability.
2. Leaving it until crisis point before beginning to work on the culture. Nearly all organisations should have begun work on their culture two years before they actually need to do so.
3. Working on their culture before they understand what culture is and what it does.
4. Using external survey providers and relying on them to explain to you what your culture is. The whole process suggests you are handing over the accountability of your culture to others. It's a lazy, shallow option. Global engagement surveys indicate that on average, engagement scores have barely increased over the past ten years.
5. Leaving responsibility for culture solely with the HR team. Culture is way bigger and more comprehensive than even the best HR team has the capacity to influence and support. Culture belongs to everyone in the business so everyone needs to feel accountable and responsible for culture, not just the HR team.
6. Thinking culture must change, but you personally don't have to. Culture only changes when people are willing to change themselves.

Do small businesses with just a handful of employees need to think about their culture or is it mainly for larger companies?

Any business with more than three people on the team needs to think about their culture. Culture occurs when three or more people come together to work for a common purpose. Companies with less than 50 people usually do a pretty good job at crafting their own culture in

“ A toxic culture can put you out of business. Just ask Enron. ”

a successful manner. Once companies get larger than 50 people and especially larger than several hundred, culture becomes significantly more complex to identify and align with the business strategy.

What are the consequences if a business owner does not take culture seriously?

A toxic culture can put you out of business. Just ask Enron or a number of other similar companies. Enron wasn't put out of business by their competitors offering superior products or pricing them out of the market. It didn't collapse as a result of a recession or even the global financial crisis. Its own culture put it out of business!

In today's business context, a misaligned culture is a risk management issue. I was fortunate enough to be invited to speak at the Warren Buffet conference circuit last year and heard Warren tell his sixty thousand plus audience, "A great company culture makes your business money. A toxic company culture costs your business money or costs you your business."

When someone of Warren's stature says attention to company culture is important, it probably pays to listen and act accordingly.

How does a company recognise whether their current culture needs changing?

The answer to this question is really simple. If any one of your business KPIs is being detrimentally influenced by the performance of your culture, your culture needs to adjust, immediately!

Other clear indicators that your culture needs to change are high staff turnover and average to low staff engagement. You should also

look out for increasing customer complaints as well as lower levels of productivity and performance.

What are the steps to creating a better company culture?

That's a really big question. I'll try and provide a short and succinct response, with the understanding that there is more to it than what I'm about to share.

In simple terms, I have four steps I guide my clients through to create a better culture;

1. Awareness
2. Appreciation
3. Action
4. Achievement

Let me explain a little more about each:

- *Awareness* — I estimate that 95 per cent of all organisational cultures underperform. They never reach their potential. When you investigate why this is the case, a very simple and obvious fact quickly becomes apparent. What I am about to share may sound a little harsh, but I stand by the observation that most companies don't have a clue what culture is! They don't understand how culture forms and functions or how it is structured. The most important step in any culture development approach is to first understand culture. All my culture education works starts with awareness. The vast majority of the approach I take is to raise people's awareness and ability to see how company culture draws on anthropology techniques and methods.
- *Appreciation* — Once you have an awareness of culture, you are in a position to accurately appreciate what state your current culture

is in and how to approach its improvement in a particular way. You can also appreciate which aspects of culture to prioritise and how to connect them with your business strategy.

- *Action* — At the action stage you are in a position to effectively know you are taking the best and most relevant action to develop your culture. Too many organisations start their work with culture at this third step having not completed the first two. I understand taking action is the exciting and rewarding bit of culture work as it's the part where you really feel like you're making a difference. However, without the first two steps, it is likely that you're not targeting the most effective part of culture to enhance. A poorly designed and executed culture change process will ensure the old culture dynamics quickly assert their well-worn presence and sabotage your latest efforts for change.
- *Achievement* — The final step is to monitor, record and codify what your culture work has achieved. This goes far beyond simply measuring your results. It means understanding which aspects of the culture contributed to generating these results and understanding why this is so. Codifying your culture's achievements can then be fed into increasing your knowledge about effective culturing. This enables you to loop back into step one of the development culture cycle and become aware again. By doing this, you are constantly circling through the four phases on culture development and enhancing your ability to develop your culture.

During the hiring process, how do you determine if a new recruit is going to match your company culture?

You firstly have to be able to truly understand and accurately articulate your company culture at a deeper level than saying we have a 'collaborative' or 'creative' culture. Once you have described in depth your culture and the culture's structure and function, ask a candidate to share how they feel they might fit or even misfit with such a culture. You can also ask them if they have any experiences

positive or negative in working in a culture such as the one you have described.

What are some of your favourite quotes that you use to educate companies about culture?

“If culture eats strategy for breakfast, then what’s your strategy for culture?”

I find most organisations don’t have a plan for their culture, they only have a few activities such as creating a set of values or running an annual engagement survey. These only scratch the surface of what culture has to offer. I use the above quote in my keynotes as part of a call to action. It reminds companies to take culture seriously enough to develop a strategy for its growth and alignment.

“Culture delivers performance. Strategy directs performance.”

I use this quote in the culture education program to highlight that culture is far more than the fluffy stuff many organisations think it is. This quote helps start the conversation for business leaders to learn that culture is the source of their business performance. Many leaders hadn’t thought about culture in this way. This quote has proven to be a real light bulb moment for many business leaders, helping them begin to see what culture’s true contribution is to their business.

“Culture without strategy is directionless, but strategy without culture is powerless.”

I’ve changed this from an original quote, “culture without strategy is aimless,” as I disagree slightly with the accuracy of this statement. I believe all cultures are aiming at something, even if that is just maintaining their status quo. However, I do believe culture without strategy is directionless so I’ve taken the liberty of adjusting the wording to support my clients’ understanding of the relationship between the two.

Free BONUS GIFT

Michael Henderson has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$25.00 to all readers of this book.

Insights into Creating a High-Performance Company Culture — In this ebook, Michael Henderson shares a powerful collection of the elements organisations need to understand to optimise their company culture. As you read this publication, you'll learn what it takes to create an effective company culture and discover how to ensure you have a high-performance team.

Simply visit the web page below and follow the directions to download:

www.SecretsExposed.com.au/business-experts

EXPERIENCE SELLS



IVEN FRANGI

“ The customer experience is what you design. Service is how you deliver. It's a mix of the hard systems with the soft skills of the people who customers interact with. The balance is between the high tech and the high touch. ”

Iven Frangi .

IVEN FRANGI

Iven Frangi was born in Sydney and tells people, "I was manufactured here from imported parts." His father was Egyptian and Jewish, his mother Scottish and Catholic but educated in England. No wonder he ended up in business, teaching people how to manage differences.

Iven left university, where he studied psychology, to go into business. After initially working with the family jewellery business and at Grace Bros, he realised he wanted to run his own business.

At age 20, Iven was introduced to Allan Pease, a sales manager recruiting for the National Mutual Insurance company. With Allan's training, by age 22 Iven was one of the youngest to qualify for the exclusive Million Dollar Round Table. His mentor Allan later invited him to contribute to his best-selling book, *Body Language*.

Iven has been featured on the Business Skills Education TV network and has presented the Sales and Marketing education program for Deakin University. He is a Fellow of the Customer Service Institute of Australia. In conjunction with business futurist Craig Rispin, Iven co-authored the book *High Tech – High Touch Selling*. He has also been recognised as Speaker of the Year by the Professional Speakers Association.

Iven is regarded as one of Australasia's customer and sales experience management specialists. Iven has spoken, trained, conducted workshops and mentored in places ranging from conference centres to hotels, a monastery, farm paddocks, factories, shop floors, hospital wards, cruise ships and even Long Bay Gaol (not as an inmate).

Iven improves himself as well as businesses. He has recently lost over 70 kilos and is happier and healthier than he was 30 years ago (in case you see an old video).

What was your very first significant job and what did it teach you?

All my careers have had one common thread — working with people where communication is key.

I started in retail at Grace Bros and was introduced to a SWAP club (Salespeople With A Purpose) when I was 19. I declared to the group that I had sales skills — a triumph of confidence over ability — and that I needed a better paying job. Two weeks later I was selling swimming pool equipment by cold calling and visiting people in their homes. Great training!

A year later, I was talking to the president of my SWAP club, a great speaker named Ron Tacchi, and told him I needed something bigger and better. Two days later, Allan Pease called me and asked me to look at joining the National Mutual (now AMP) as an insurance salesman. I went for the interview and joined Allan's team. That was the start of my career.

Selling life insurance on a pure commission basis by going door-to-door and cold calling taught me two key things. Firstly, if you don't sell you don't eat. This means you must be self-sufficient and have a no excuses attitude. The second thing is a modification to an old saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." The fact is, it's better if you have a thirsty horse. The lesson was — and still is — discover why people might want what you have and talk about that rather than your features and benefits list.

Who were your biggest business mentors? What important lessons have you learnt from them?

Joining Allan at National Mutual was a new world. The insurance industry was the best training ground and Allan took that to the next level. He was one of Australia's first professional speakers. He

“ The insurance industry was the best training ground and Allan took that to the next level. ”

was writing his book *Body Language* when I joined him. When international speakers came to town he would get them to come and talk to us, his team.

Allan was my first major mentor. He introduced me to professional speaking in 1982 when he took me to the Professional Speakers Association convention in Chicago. My first breakfast there I introduced myself to the man sitting next to me with a simple, “Hi, I’m Iven from Australia.” He replied, “Hello, I’m Zig from Texas.” I had breakfast with the sales doyen Zig Ziglar.

I have had some other special and brilliant mentors since then, who are also friends. We have Australians who are world leaders in business. Matt Church of Thought Leaders taught me how to craft a meaningful message for my market. Taki Moore of Million Dollar Coaching taught me how to make the messages commercial. I have been attending monthly meetings with leading business futurist Craig Rispin (an American-Australian) for over 20 years to learn about what is about to happen, to be ahead of the curve for my clients.

I also believe I am mentored by my clients. It might sound cheesy but because they are always reaching for something better, I have to balance proven skills and strategies while being at the forefront with them.

What are the various careers you’ve had over the last 40 years and what did you learn from them?

Throughout my career, I’ve had different roles all with the common theme of customer interaction.

- *Swimming pool equipment and insurance sales on commission* — It's all about being valuable and significant for the client while backing yourself and your skills.
- *Regional and General Manager in Corporates* — Teams matter and big organisations have their own momentum.
- *Thirty years International Keynote Speaker/Mentor/Trainer* — Always deliver to the client brief. Help by expanding the brief where you can see things the client can't. Always be learning. It's all about the audience. If you want to be rebooked and asked back, be funny. Humour breaks through barriers.

You started your career working with 'Mr Body Language' Allan Pease. What did you learn from him during the time you spent together?

Allan is one of the great teachers in business and life. The two major things I still use and rely on every day are these:

- *Flip the sale* — The original Hot Button Selling program remains the most effective approach, whatever it's called now. No one wants to buy life insurance. It's a necessary evil for most people. Allan taught us all how to ask people why it would be important to have insurance protection and let them explain, using a simple series of questions, why it would be important for them to own it. The plans sold themselves. Customers had no objections and they set their own budgets so there was no price argument. Genius. I still use the modified fundamentals today.
- *Don't fret the how* — This was Allan's second big lesson. Allan was writing *Body Language* when I first met him. He knew he wanted to write a number one best-seller. He didn't know how to do that. He always says that when you get really clear on what you want, the 'how' happens. *Body Language* went on to be a best-seller. Allan and Barbara Pease are now among the highest selling nonfiction authors in the world.

In your opinion, what are the top qualities of a successful salesperson?

Over my career, I have either recruited or been part of recruiting around 3,400 salespeople (yes, I did a quick count). From those that have been in the top five per cent, there are three core criteria I always look for.

Great salespeople keep score. They know their numbers. With all the new apps and CRM services, it's easier than ever. You can track any point along the sales pathway and see where you can make improvements and change your score. You can see if a prospect opened an email, looked online, made a call, asked for information, had an interview, commented on Facebook or left a review on Google. There are so many data points and so many apps to help track the key metrics. Yes, it's more complex, but it's so much better for salespeople. This part is so important I have created a special online workshop you can get access to at the end of the chapter. Knowing your numbers you can 'double your business without doubling your leads'. When you know your numbers and ratios, you can easily see where you can fine tune for better results.

When assessing a salesperson, I review their speaking to listening ratio. I know, from observing the best of the best, in multiple industries, in short and long-term sales, the listening ratio needs to be at least 60 per cent. This means they have to structure their sale around asking good questions. This forms the basis of Flipping The Sale. A good salesperson takes the customer's viewpoint and asks questions so they can be relevant.

Another question — do they have a franchise mentality? Great franchises work on having a repeatable process that makes it easy to do business. Great salespeople have a system. That way they can concentrate on the client and not themselves.

Do they really enjoy selling? Is there a genuine interest in what they are doing, the clients they are working with and what they are selling? If not, we have a problem.

Are they resilient? Making a sale is uplifting and satisfying. Sales is also bloody difficult. Business owners, companies, sales managers and all parts of the business bet their existence on salespeople being effective and getting results. If you own the business and you also sell it's all on you. Working with potential and existing clients, production schedules, paperwork and fulfillment or installation or delivery of your service can be hard work and emotionally draining. Being able to bounce back from the inevitable losses, rejections and frustrations is vital.

Finally, a good salesperson knows it's not about the product. There's an old story that no one wants a 50m drill bit. They want a 50m hole drilled. This is still relevant. The best salespeople I have worked with come to client meetings with an open mind and a notebook, not layers of product brochures or product specs. They become an expert on the client and what they need and then only show what is relevant and what is going to make a difference.

If a business owner is struggling with sales, what are some of the steps they can do to improve this part of their business?

Business owners and sales managers talk to me about achieving more sales, with less effort from their team, in markets that are getting more complicated. The vast majority of businesses I work with have a good sales process. The issue is that it's not fully designed from end to end. What they have is a sales process, not a purchase path.

There are three factors when there is an issue with the sales numbers:

- *Is there a map of the Pathway to Purchase?* — That's a map of the journey a customer takes to do business where each step is ranked

on a 'hate' to 'brag about it' scale. When you have a map, you can see where the customer and team are doing well or not. Being able to see that map gives huge clarity about where to invest time and effort. Amazon maps every step of what customers do. They are fanatical about it.

- *Do you know what the Makers and Breakers are?* — The map will tell you two vital things. Where things are being slowed for the customer by Breakers, which damage the customer's experience while trying to buy. You will also see the Makers — the parts of the purchase path where you enhance the customer's experience. The challenge is this — what can you do about the Breakers to turn them into Makers? Years ago, Amazon found that over 65 per cent of customers abandoned the shopping cart after actually selecting a product. This caused a huge loss rate and also a major opportunity. There was a major breaker when it came to filling in the credit card, shipping and billing details. Even though people wanted the product, it was too hard to take all these steps. You have probably experienced this frustration yourself, particularly when shopping from your smartphone.
- *Fix the Breakers* — This is the fastest way to help the customers to buy and your sales team to sell. If you don't have a map, this will be very hard. To fix their cart abandonment Breaker, Amazon designed a new process. They had been asking customers to remember the card, delivery and billing information themselves. To remove the Breaker, they designed 'One Click' purchasing. Now, customers only have to confirm their details, which are saved within their account information. Easy as that. In 1999, this was described by Wharton Business school as 'The game changer for Amazon'. It was so good, Apple licensed the technology.

Do you have a map? Know your Breakers and Makers? Go to www.frangi.com/mycxmap to get a sample map and find out how to use it.

Describe to us the work that you do and the value it provides to your clients.

As customers, because of the internet and social media technology, we have changed the way we buy. My work is to show my clients how to build and deliver an experience their customers can't get anywhere else, which in turn prevents them from going anywhere else. The experience your business provides needs to be more than differentiated. It must be distinctive. It must stand out.

We all know Apple, Amazon and Emirates as distinctive brands. I show my clients how to be distinctive in their markets in order to gain the customers they most want. Part of what I teach clarifies that the customers you are likely to profit from the most are likely to be the ones you enjoy working with.

The old 'handle objections and close the sale' approach is dead. It was invented in 1927 by JT King. Some businesses are still using this 90 year old method and expecting to be effective. I show my clients how to stop selling and instead build a 'pathway to purchase'.

In your opinion, what are most common mistakes you see business owners make?

There are three mistakes I see regularly in my area of customer and sales experiences.

Firstly, anyone involved with sales must build a pathway to purchase and not a sales pipeline. This means you have to make the strategic shift from Seller to Assistant Buyer. It's a different experience. Selling is about 'push', 'convince', and speaking 70 per cent of the time, as well as pressure

“ There are three mistakes I see regularly in my area of customer and sales experiences. ”

and short-term sales targets. Being an Assistant Buyer is about pull, attraction, asking, listening 70 per cent of time, building trust and establishing a longer-term view of the customer. Ironically, Assistant Buyers end up selling more, in a shorter time, for higher margins. We have proven it.

Second, many businesses are not deliberate in designing an end to end experience. Think about any airline. You travel from Sydney to London, or Sydney to Brisbane. Nothing happens by accident. With each trip, there is a schedule for the safety and service elements. The delivered service will change depending on what class of seat you paid for, but it will be repeated on any flight, of any length to any destination on that airline. This model of the start to finish experience should be the same for every business.

Third. Get out of what I call the 'Bland Band'. Think coffee shops. There are many, all over the place. It's hard to tell the difference between them. This is the bland band, where businesses go to die. Bland is the enemy of brand. Every great business has a clear distinction. They stand for something and have an experience that supports it. Apple retail is a happy place for customers to go. Amazon online provides loads of choice and a delivery system that is second to none. The common mistake business owners make is forgetting to be distinctive.

What are your top tips to grow a more successful customer and sales experience for customers?

- *Create a Pathway to Purchase* — Not a sales funnel, by mapping the customer interaction from end to end.
- *Find the 'Breakers'* — Identify the points of friction for your clients and turn them into 'Makers' to go from friction to flow.
- *Measure Customer Effort* — How hard it was to do business (this doesn't refer to your Net Promoter Score).

- *Import Improvements* — Borrow, import or steal great ideas and practices from anywhere that does business well.
- *Create a Customer Pledge* — This is the set of standards that let customers know how they will be treated and looked after.
- *Keep Score* — Know your numbers for sales, margins, customer effort score and behaviour metrics.
- *Go Mobile* — Create ways your customers can interact with you anytime, from anywhere.

Why is customer experience becoming so popular? Is it just another business fad?

Customer experience (CX) is seen as the new business battleground but actually it's not new at all. It has just been formalised.

My dad owned and ran an Italian restaurant which opened in 1956, in Sydney. It had the dripping wax candles in Chianti bottles, the staff all spoke Italian to each other, there was an espresso machine (rare at that time), and my dad greeted and welcomed everyone at the door. The distinctive experience created the success. Today, with online and digital added to the marketing mix, the desire, and design of, for an experience has been formalised and expanded. CEOs and business owners are focussing on CX to gain competitive advantage.

Why? Let's look at some numbers. In 2018, Econsultancy conducted their survey for Digital Marketing Trends, asking companies to state the single most exciting opportunity for business. The result? Customer experience came in first, beating content and mobile marketing. A study by research firm Walker reported two outcomes, stating that, "Eighty-six per cent of buyers will pay more for a better customer experience," and, "By 2020 customer experience will overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator." In my view, that has already happened.

CX is a purposeful, business approach. If your customers like you and continue to like you, they are going to do business with you and recommend you to the others. It doesn't matter what kind of business you're in — improving the experience for your customers is the key to increasing retention, satisfaction and sales. CX pushes the three revenue drivers. Higher customer retention, higher customer satisfaction and increase cross selling/up selling.

How does customer experience differ to the more widely used term of customer service?

The customer experience is what you design. Service is how you deliver. It's a mix of the hard systems and processes with the soft skills of the people who customers interact with. The balance is now between the high tech and the high touch.

It gets a little more interesting when you have clear contrast. Think Apple and Amazon online. Both are clear leaders in their markets. I ask people in my programs, "Who has bought something from Amazon online? What was it like?" Almost universally they answer that the service was excellent, saying Amazon is easy to use, with great delivery and progress notifications. They even liked being upsold to and receiving recommendations based on other people's purchases. I ask them if it was great service and the common answer is "Yes". Then I point out there was no real human service. The only people directly involved with the sale are the pickers and packers in the distribution centre, and soon those will be replaced by robots.

Contrast the Amazon experience with Apple, where concentration is on the design and feeling at every point along the purchase path and continued use journey. You own and use Apple products for a long time. The approach is clearly high touch across the website and then with the in-store design and then the iOS. The packaging is a whole world of attention to tiny details to make any product feel super

special just getting it out of the box. The stores are now 'community centres', where customers can enjoy the Apple ambience.

Did you know Apple store staff are not expected to ask you to buy products? They are tasked with helping you so much that you will feel obligated to buy — the Law of Psychological Reciprocity. It's part of the high touch design. Plus, it's effective. Apple is known for making the highest profit per square foot of retail space.

In your opinion, what are the top reasons why business owners should pay attention to their customer experience?

A designed and deliberate CX is the key to long term profitability because it creates more than differentiation. It creates distinction. For that reason, it drives the three Rs (Repeat business, Referrals and online Reviews), which drive long term, stable revenue.

Customers are demanding better experiences. One of the major factors fuelling this is mobile apps. If customers find one too difficult to use, they will download another one. Customers are applying the same logic to buying and using anything. I call it the 'Appification' of business.

Creating a customer pledge clarifying how your customers can expect to be treated is a way to galvanise and focus teams. You can't design an experience pledge without involving the entire business.

What's the big challenge for CEOs, executives teams and business owners, or anyone who wants to improve their customers' experience?

A huge challenge to improving customer experience is getting perspective. When you are focussed on the day-to-day issues of running and growing a business it is hard to see what else is around

you. That's why it is so valuable to be part of a like-minded group of business owners.

The big part of perspective in CX is that your competitors are not the issue. Instead, you are competing with the whole market. A client of mine who runs a financial services business put it this way, saying, "A customer told me that my service levels weren't good enough. We pride ourselves on being a leader in what we do in financial services, but this customer explained he had an app from his gym on his phone that lets him see and track his progress and fitness, book classes and appointments with his osteopath, and get tips and help on nutrition. He just noted we were not as easy to deal with. That hurt."

Your business is not being judged by your competitors. You are being judged by any product or service the customer experiences, in any market.

One of the main reasons I get asked to work on sales and customer experiences (sales is part of the customer experience, even though clients often treat them as distinct parts) is because I work with many different businesses, in many markets, with all sorts of products and services. Clients tell me I really speed up their results because I can show them what is tested and being really effective already, in many markets. Importing ideas is faster than innovation.

**How do you suggest customer experience be mapped out?
Is it through a mind map, flowchart, chart, spreadsheet or
something else?**

This is a fun and very useful exercise for a team to do. Here are the steps:

- *Assemble a cross-section of people from the business* — Marketing, management, fulfilment or delivery, inside and field sales. Cover every area of activity.

- *Get some small post-it notes in different colours — 3M are best.*
- *Plot all the steps/actions a customer goes through to do business with you — Put them on separate post-its, from beginning to end. Lay out the path on a long table, from left to right.*
- *Identify the steps you have missed — That's why we use post-its. They are easily moved.*
- *Sort the steps — Allocate the ranking you think the customer would give the step from 'Hate' to 'Brag'. This will cause discussion because there will be different opinions.*

Now, you have a path and ratings — from your view of the customer's perception. Using this, you can see where and what needs to be addressed. Go to www.frangi.com/mycxmap to get a sample map and find out how to use it.

The mapping process will, of course, identify dozens of things that a company is "not doing". How do you recommend they close the gap and what should the team work on first?

I ask my audiences and groups, "Who has been to Disneyland and how long were you there?"

Many people respond and I ask someone who was there for more than a day, "What was it like?" A typical response is, "It was really great. We loved our walk down Main Street and the rides, and the kids had a ball. The lines were long."

That's the initial summary of a couple of days and it always amazes me how short the response is.

When describing an experience, people remember the first, last, the top and the bottom. Your first could be the web or a call centre, your last could be

“ We then looked at what issues caused the most friction with customers. ”

delivery or using a service. The top and bottom is best and worst. That's where you start on your map. The goal is making the experience memorable and moving friction to flow.

How do you get your team to buy into this customer experience to ensure it works?

The customer and sales experience is affected by everyone in the business. Everyone can make a contribution, even if they don't see themselves as having an impact.

For example, I get feedback from people in the accounts department that they don't impact the experience, they just send invoices. I explained to an accounts department in an IT firm last month that the monthly invoices they send are the most frequent contact the customer has with the business. I could see their surprise at this revelation. We then looked at what issues caused the most friction with customers. The main breaker was being charged for service phone calls. The sales team was surprised as they sold support as a benefit, which it was. However, customers resented having an often varied monthly account. It was a Breaker.

Sales and accounting looked at this and designed packages that removed the cost variability (a Maker). They designed a staged migration process with marketing and the internal and field sales teams reported hugely positive reactions. As a result, friction was removed and sales went up.

What else do business owners need to know about customer experience?

The accepted wisdom is that there are three building blocks in business — price, quality and service. Customer experience trumps them all.

The currency of customer experience is trust. It's not some wishy-washy, airy-fairy, feel-good strategy. It refers to how you present your business and how you market and sell your products and services in the digital age, when everything is so transparent it's more trust based than ever before.

In Fortune Magazine, international architect and designer Arthur Gensler said, "Trust in business enjoys two main benefits. The first is with your clients. If they know you are honest and direct with them, they usually are willing to work through challenges with you, and they won't hesitate to be a referral source when things go well."

"The second benefit is that authentic collaboration will take root within your firm. Your people can trust each other to act honourably and to fulfil their defined roles on a project assignment or company initiative according to shared company values. The earned trust of clients and employees serves as the basis of a strong business, and it has served our firm well for five decades."

How do you stay up to date with the latest trends and strategies that affect you and your clients?

I am a fan of curated content — services where news and information is sent to me based on my preferences and interest. I constantly scan for interesting things, but I rely on Flipboard and Google Alerts. Flipboard is easy to use and digest. Google Alerts lets me be very specific, especially if I have a new client or keynote speech coming up. I just set one up for 'Customer Experience Innovation in Healthcare' as I have a new client which is a hospital.

I also 'collect' customer and sales experiences locally and when I travel. I was in the US recently and made a specific detour to stay at the Virgin Hotel in Chicago. They have an outstanding and very different guest experience.

Are there any significant quotes or sayings which you live your life by?

A great speaker named Charlie T Jones once said, “You’ve never made a right decision in your life. You make a decision and then you make it the right decision.” It’s easy to look at what someone else is doing and get diverted by the shiny object syndrome. This talks to me about making a choice, sticking with it and believing that you can do it.

What are some of your future plans or goals (personal or business) for the next five to ten years?

My biggest imitative is to make customer and sales experience development a truly great experience. There are many mastermind and boardroom groups and they work well but I’ve established two with a difference. Firstly, a Masters of Experience Boardroom group — focused on building highly profitable customer experiences. Secondly, a Masters of Persuasion group — focused on the Pathway to Purchase and leveraged sales growth.

The format is simple — Share, learn, experience, visit. In both groups we share, learn from each other and stay accountable. The extra part is the immersions. Every three months we visit outstanding examples of practitioners in each category. We all love the hands-on interaction, being able to see great experiences being delivered and talking to other business owners and managers about what, how and why they created the business they did. Like excursions at school, visits and seeing things shortens the learning curve.

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MEDIA INFLUENCE



SUE PAPADOULIS

“ The key thing that most audiences want in a story is the solution to a problem. The good news is every business solves problems for clients, therefore every business has something that's interesting to the media. ”

Sue Papadoulis

SUE PAPADOULIS

Sue Papadoulis was born in the hills of Perth, Western Australia, in 1970. On a half-acre block surrounded by open paddocks, a creek and lots of trees, there was ample freedom and plenty of space for creativity.

Growing up, Sue loved to read and write. As a kid, she'd spend hours riding her bike and making up stories. This creative freedom was tempered by the responsibility that came with being the daughter of a primary school headmaster who was known for being fiercely competitive. Her parents instilled in their two daughters the need to be self-sufficient, which sparked an entrepreneurial flair.

Deciding on a field of study came down to a choice between Sue's passion for writing and her desire to be financially successful — journalism or commerce? Passion won out and she completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism.

Sue quickly secured her first role in the media and rose through the ranks to be News Editor before switching to PR management. Having a baby and wanting to work from home was the catalyst for starting her own business.

As a journalist, Sue was nominated for a national Youth Media Award and while in business she won the media category in the National Trust Awards. She is listed as one of Perth's top 100 influential business owners and innovators.

Sue now leads Profile Media and a team of journalists who provide PR services, delivering outstanding publicity results for clients in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. She has also launched the Good News Movement, an initiative designed to encourage more positive reporting. Her next goal is to make this a global good news content platform.

Tell us about your early career. What were your major achievements?

My first job as a journalist was in TV and then I moved into my area of passion — the fast-paced world of radio, with half-hourly deadlines and lots of adrenalin. I stayed in radio for ten years, working in Perth and also in London. When I moved back to Australia I became the youngest radio News Editor in the country.

Being responsible for so many staff and news bulletins suddenly brought into sharp focus the impact I was having on the world. In a major ‘aha’ moment, I realised journalism was no longer for me. I just couldn’t stomach the negativity.

My move into PR really came about because I felt there were no other options with the skills I had. I actually didn’t want to do it — it was more a case of necessity. What I discovered was I was really good at PR, not because I understood the academics, but because I understood what a journalist wanted. After entering the industry, I worked with some of the biggest media organisations in the world including the New York Times, the BBC and The Times of London. I also brought the *Amazing Race* TV franchise to Australia. I generated millions of dollars in publicity simply because I understood what the media needed. In doing so, my clients got what they wanted, which was massive exposure.

After seven years in PR, I got married, had a baby and decided to start my own business, which was a real step-off-the-cliff moment. My first business was as a sole trader PR practitioner working with the tourism industry. It went well, but I have always had a desire to do something more and have a bigger impact. I started another business for women like me who had a fear of starting a business. It was a membership website called HomeBizChicks.com, which I managed to get exposure for on a national TV show *A Current Affair*. After the television appearance, we did \$40,000 in sales almost instantly, selling a \$20 a month membership package.

“ This business now generates hundreds of thousands of dollars of coverage in mainstream and social media. ”

This experience helped me realise that in a world where many PR firms overcharge and under-deliver, I had skills that many business owners could benefit from. I moved my PR offering away from being a sole trader into running courses for business owners, teaching them how to do their own PR. We offered training in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, with close to a thousand people attending each year.

After many requests, we began offering PR services to clients ourselves under the name Profile Media. This business now generates hundreds of thousands of dollars of coverage in mainstream and social media. Our uniqueness comes from the fact we are all former journalists, rather than PR people. It may seem a subtle difference from the outside, but it makes all the difference in the world in terms of the results we generate for our clients.

What do you do and how does it provide value to your clients.

Very simply, we generate positive publicity for our clients in the media — on TV, digital outlets, newspapers, radio, magazines and social media.

People come to us looking for various outcomes. It may be an increase in sales leads and customers or it could be to create awareness or rise above their competition. A big drawback for wanting to be in the media is to establish that third-party credibility that advertising simply can't deliver. Being in the media provides an implied endorsement that what you do is good and you are an expert.

Most businesses are doing some kind of promotion that isn't cutting through. They might have a social media strategy that is taking a lot of time, effort and money. Many business owners attend networking events, relying on word of mouth or referrals to drive business. What they lack is that big push to help them reach the right target market instantly.

Our approach is to determine the target market of our client and assess where they can be found in the media. We work out the kind of stories those media outlets are interested in and then shape what our clients offer into a story the media will love. We start with the end in mind and work backwards. Rather than thinking about promoting our client, we think about what the media would want and how we can tap into that. The process allows our clients to get the promotion they want.

Increasingly, clients are also seeking help to manage issues that have the potential to spill into mainstream or social media. In the age of social sharing, it is easy for misinformation to spread quickly. Businesses of all sizes need strategies to deal with issues before they become bigger news.

Stories in mainstream media can also have a massive positive impact on your social media presence. Mainstream media outlets like TV shows have a big social media following. Having your content shared through their social media channels provides the potential for the message to go viral.

For example, we got our client, Mahmood Hussain of Global Drone Solutions, on to Channel 9's *Today Show*. Channel 9 then took one minute of this story and shared it on their Facebook page. It became the most viewed clip of the week and had 220,000 views. Mahmood then used another TV story we generated and paid to boost the post on Facebook as part of his digital marketing strategy. This has led to close to 700,000 views in 12 months. The business still receives sales leads from publicity that was generated more than a year prior.

Can you share some notable success stories of clients that you have worked with?

We have hundreds of success stories but there are a few which stand out:

- *Rose Smith, Absolute Soul Secrets* — As the owner of the largest psychic network in the Southern Hemisphere, Rose has a big business with a never-ending supply of great stories. Over the first 12 months of us sending out a press release each month we generated close to 100 pieces of publicity, including many TV appearances. Rose shared with us her Google Analytics results which showed spikes in traffic timed to exactly when she appeared in the media. In that first year, traffic to her website doubled.
- *Nic Waugh, PLA Aviation* — Nic took over the exclusive Australian and New Zealand distribution of the Italian made Blackshape Prime aircraft, dubbed the Ferrari of the Sky. We created a launch event which resulted in 30 pieces of publicity including a live cross from Channel 7's *Sunrise*. Channel 7 and Channel 10 news stories were syndicated around the country, we had digital and newspaper coverage with *Herald Sun* and a live Facebook video with *Business Inside Australia* which had more than 220,000 views. The total value of the publicity was put at more than \$550,000. This resulted in a massive spike in web traffic and many quality sales leads from people interested in purchasing the \$280,000 plane.
- *Peter Mumford Arbor Operations* — A press release about how to use trees to increase the value of your property created dozens of valuable media stories and subsequent backlinks for arborist Peter Mumford. The story was picked up by two key outlets, domain.com.au and realestate.com.au and then syndicated by them, leading to 44 individual pieces of publicity across community and regional newspapers and websites. Each site linked to Peter's website, providing great search engine optimisation benefits.

In your definition, what is 'the media'?

The media includes any platform that reaches a significant number of consumers. This includes mainstream media, such as TV, digital news sites, radio, newspapers and magazines, but also bloggers and influencers.

Journalists report on the news. Bloggers create content on a specific topic, industry or for a particular audience demographic. An influencer is anyone who has the ability to impact on the purchasing decisions of others because of some kind of perceived authority, knowledge, position or relationships. They are often trendsetters who are well connected. They may be a celebrity, an expert in their field or be very outspoken. These influencers usually have a large social media following.

In terms of what a business owner needs to know, how does the media work?

For business owners, the key thing to understand is that the media is primarily seeking good quality content that is going to engage their audience in some way.

There will always be the big stories of the day that must be covered. These stories, such as political scandals, natural disasters and crime related incidents are interesting for their shock value. Beyond these major events, most stories in the media are simply useful pieces of information that the editor knows their audience will find interesting.

The media is consistently seeking feedback from their audience, often in real time, about what they want.

“ An influencer is anyone who has the ability to impact on the purchasing decisions of others. ”

The key thing that most audiences want in a story is the solution to a problem. The good news is every business solves problems for clients, therefore every business has something that's interesting to the media.

Why do you say that the media doesn't actually care about your business?

First and foremost, the media cares about their audience. They don't care about you as a business owner or what your business does. They care about the information you can share with their audience.

Put simply, you're not interesting to the media — it's the stuff you know about. The media is driven by advertising, which is driven by how many people are reading, watching and listening. Your role in the transaction with the media is to give them a story that is so interesting that people will engage with it. If you can give this to them, they will suddenly become very interested in you.

What are your top reasons media exposure does wonders for a business that is looking to grow?

Media coverage can drive leads and potential customers directly to you. I've seen companies create 6-figure sales from one segment on TV. It can also be a slow burn that builds over several months with consistent media exposure.

Being in the media can help you rise above your competition quickly. Most businesses are doing the same kind of promotions, but few use media exposure and publicity as a strategy to stand out from the crowd.

Media exposure can have a massive positive impact on your web and social presence. Links from authority media sites are deemed as highly valuable in terms of search engine optimisation, meaning

your website can be ranked higher as a result. Leveraging mainstream media's social media can help your message go viral.

Perhaps the most significant outcome is that you achieve 'expert status' by being regularly seen in the media over a period of months. The media may start to come to you for comment on relevant stories. You will become 'top-of-mind' for potential clients. In the age of social media, disruption of industries, changing marketing strategies and global markets, being seen as an expert is increasingly important.

What are some of your tried and tested methods for coming up with a great story idea or angle?

By far the easiest way to come up with a great story idea or angle is to consider the problems you solve for clients. By making a list of the problems you solve, you're also making a list of story ideas you could pitch. An easy way to approach this is to start by using the words 'how to' and then fill in the blank.

For example, a real estate agent solves hundreds of problems. They know how to choose the best suburbs or even the best street. They know how to predict when prices will rise or fall, how to find good tenants, how to invest for capital growth, and how to style a house to sell it fast. All of these are stories which can be pitched to the media.

Another way of coming up with a story idea is to link to something topical that is already being covered in the news. If the media is already talking about a topic then half the battle is won. Now, you only need to give them another side to the story.

You can tie in with a big story that has just emerged or you can prepare for stories you know will happen such as:

1. Political leadership challenges: A leadership expert can comment on what makes a good or bad leader.

2. Valentine's Day: A relationship expert could advise on how to inject more romance into your marriage or a fitness centre could have some fun with the idea that the gym is a better place to pick up than a bar.
3. End of financial year: A human resources expert could discuss which industries and jobs will rise in the new financial year and identify those that will drop away.

In the past, we were told to send a media release. Is that still the best approach?

There are three good ways of approaching the media. These include a media release, pitch or opinion piece.

The role of a media release is to introduce you as an expert and demonstrate that you have something of value for the media and their audience. It is the bait that attracts the media's attention. Sometimes your media release will become the story if it's copied and pasted. Most often, the media will want to interview an expert to create their own story. The media release could be the basis of a bigger story the media will expand on or it could spark an entirely new idea.

An opinion piece provides content based on your opinion about an issue affecting the media's audience. Send your opinion piece to online and print media once you have already established a relationship via recent press releases and solid story ideas for the media outlet.

A pitch is used when contacting a blogger or influencer. It is more commercial in nature because the focus is less to do with a story and more about promoting your product or service. The benefit to them is that what you are offering will help their audience or put them ahead of a trend. Bloggers and influencers often expect some kind of payment so a pitch can outline your idea on how to work together with the budget you want to spend.

How do you get the contact details of the right person within a media outlet?

It's worth taking the time to research the name, email address and phone number of the person best suited to receiving your media release. Sometimes the easiest approach is to call the reception phone number for the media outlet and ask for the name of the person and their email address — you'll be surprised how readily available media contacts are. Once you have created a list, it is important to maintain it by using it regularly. You can also use a social platform like LinkedIn to research journalist contacts.

What's the best way to grab their attention? Is it something gimmicky, something honest or something else?

The quickest and best way to get the media's attention is to give them a good story that is going to engage their audience. If you can do that, they will notice you and look out for your media releases. Many PR firms rely on something gimmicky because they don't have a journalist's mindset to come up with an angle. In my experience, I have found being gimmicky doesn't tend to work.

It's important to get a journalist's attention immediately. If you're emailing a media release, use the headline of your release as the subject line of the email so they can quickly determine what the story is about.

A journalist is often looking for an exclusive, which gives them the first opportunity to run the story before you send it anywhere else. Use this to your advantage by approaching your most desirable media outlet first and then working down your list of contacts.

“ In my experience, I have found being gimmicky doesn't tend to work. ”

“ If you feel like you’re becoming a stalker, pull back. ”

What do you do if you haven't heard back after sending several emails?

The best approach is to email and then follow up with a phone call. Don't expect a journalist to get back to you — they're often too busy. It's up to you to chase them down.

The timing of the phone call depends on what the story is and which outlet you're going after. If it's tying into a hot story that's being covered on the TV news, you'll need to follow up within an hour of sending the release. If it's a story that isn't time-dependent, a good rule of thumb is to follow up within 24 hours.

If you are having trouble getting in touch with the journalist, keep trying and be persistent but not to the point of being a pest. Your relationship with the media is just like any other business relationship. If you feel like you're becoming a stalker, pull back.

Is there something you can do to improve your chances of getting a media outlet to share a website link or even a call to action?

The only reason a media outlet will share your web link or call to action is if there is value in it for the audience. Think about how you can make it relevant and easy. Examples of valuable calls to action include digital white papers and articles, a free information session or a specific event. If you're directing people to a website, make the URL super easy to include. Anything that's hard to type or difficult to read out won't be included.

Once you've received some media exposure and coverage, what should you do with it?

Media exposure can have an immediate impact, but there are many ways to ensure you continue to benefit from it for days, months or even years down the track. Some tips include:

- *'As Seen In' on your website* — Featuring the logos of the media you've appeared in on your website creates instant credibility for visitors. You can also include this as part of your email signature.
- *In the news* — Create a new page in the navigation menu of your website where you can link to your stories in the media or load PDFs of the coverage.
- *Social media* — Share all elements of the publicity process on your social pages. You can also leverage this in real time by sharing the entire process and what it feels like. Share short videos and images of you arriving at the TV studio, sitting in the 'green room' (TV) getting makeup and hair done, and from behind the camera looking at the studio (people love to know what goes on behind the scenes). Do a live social video while you're being interviewed and another afterwards to reveal what it was like.
- *Mainstream media social media* — It's common for media organisations to share their stories on their social pages, giving their followers an opportunity to respond or comment. This is gold. The aim for you is to be quick to comment on the story (this gives a greater chance of your comment being seen at the top of the feed), reiterating what you discussed in the article or story. This will give you an opportunity to open up a conversation with your target market.
- *Share publicity with clients* — If you send a regular newsletter, be sure to include images and clips of your publicity. You could also include publicity in tenders, bids, award submissions and in your marketing — on flyers, banners or any printed collateral.

If a business owner is still struggling to gain exposure in the media, should they outsource to a public relations firm?

Outsourcing is a good option, as long as you find the right consultancy to outsource to. Having someone who understands the media from working within it as a content producer or journalist is likely to lead to greater success.

There are so many different PR firms out there, how do you find one that is good and how much should you expect to pay?

The key is to find someone who was once working in the editorial department of the media. They will understand exactly what the media is looking for. One of my biggest frustrations as a journalist was that PR people often didn't really understand what I wanted in a story so I was pitched a lot of material I couldn't use.

In terms of investment, it can vary from an average of \$15,000 to \$20,000 a month for a large PR firm in a capital city to sole traders who might charge \$2,000 to \$3,000. Bigger fees don't necessarily mean a better outcome so ensure you do your homework and speak to each agency's existing and former clients to get an understanding of the results they can deliver.

Any other thoughts or final tips for succeeding with the media?

Be authentically you. The audience is looking to connect with a real person, not someone trying to spin a message. Don't be afraid to tell it like it is and let your personality shine through.

What are your best tips around how to handle a media interview?

An important part of delivering a positive message about your business is to come across as professional during the interview. This can be a daunting process for most people, but if you prepare and give some thought to how you will manage the interview, the outcome will be positive.

Think of a couple of key messages you want to convey and get used to saying them out loud. Come up with a range of possible questions, including the ones you hope you don't get asked, and practice with someone else. You can control the interview by 'bridging' to an answer you want to give, regardless of the question you're asked. Some good 'bridging' statements include:

"... yes, but that speaks to a bigger point ..."

"... I think what you are really asking is ..."

Answer the initial question, then go on to add those lines followed by your main point, which will round off your response in a positive way.

From your perspective, what do you think holds business owners back from achieving their real potential?

We are all limited by our own self-imposed boundaries. This shows up in your business, which is ultimately a reflection of what's happening in your own mind.

When I began my very first business as a sole trader, I had just started to learn about the law of attraction. I decided to focus on attracting an amount of money I felt might be achievable but was a stretch. That figure was a rather modest \$15,000. I wrote it on a sticky note and put it on my computer screen so I looked at it every day. The

“ Never underestimate the power of your mind in determining the results you achieve. ”

very first contract I tendered for and secured was \$15,000. I was over the moon. At some point, the sticky note fell off and I didn't think about a dollar amount again for a few months. At the end of the financial year, I was going over the accounts and realised that every single piece of business I secured that year added up to \$15,000. It could have been monthly payments or several small projects for a client but they all equalled \$15,000! Imagine if I'd had \$50,000 in my mind.

Never underestimate the power of your mind in determining the results you achieve. As the saying goes — what you think about, you bring about.

What is one of the funniest things that has ever happened to you in your business career?

At the time it didn't feel so funny, but in hindsight it was hilarious.

The incident happened during my first big speaking opportunity before an audience of 400 people. That day I wore a corporate business dress. This isn't ideal when you're using a microphone because it doesn't leave too many options for clipping the battery pack to your clothes. The solution was to strap it to my underwear and feed the cord up the back of my dress and out the top at the neckline. Part way through my presentation, the microphone failed.

I thought it would mean rushing to the bathroom to quickly retrieve the power pack from my underwear, but my Sales Manager was having none of that. She swiftly told me I'd lose the audience if I left the stage so she unzipped my dress, reached into my underwear, retrieved the power pack and swapped it over. I'm quite certain a good number of

people saw my bra and undies that day, but it was so absurd I could only see the funny side.

At the end of the presentation I was swamped by people telling me how much they admired the fact I didn't get rattled and that I was able to laugh at myself. That day, we did record sales of our PR program.

What do you love most about being in a career that helps business owners achieve greater levels of success?

When I do my job, I love the growth I see in the individual. While being in the media brings many benefits for a growing business, it can also be a stretch for the business owner. Doing a live TV interview is a new and sometimes challenging experience for our clients but once they have accomplished it, there is a shift in their self-belief.

This new found confidence flows into other areas of themselves and their business. It can also have a big positive impact on staff morale. A client who ran a not-for-profit mental health service played the TV story we generated for them at their annual staff planning day and she said the pride among the team was palpable. You just can't buy that kind of experience or impact.

Over the coming years, what do you see as the major opportunities for businesses?

The only thing anyone can confidently predict is massive change. We are going through a revolution of technology and it's impacting on every aspect of our lives.

I believe the big shifts will be around ideas and services that help make our lives easier. This may paradoxically lead to our lives being busier — as technology makes things quicker and easier to do, we have more time to do more stuff! For example, driverless cars will

free up more time to do more work when we would have otherwise been driving.

An outcome of this focus on being able to get more stuff done will likely be a surge in industries that solve problems around stress, anxiety and mental health. We'll need to allocate more time to relaxation, probably not long periods at once, but in bite-sized chunks every day.

What is the best piece of business advice anyone has ever given you?

You don't need to hire a great salesperson. Instead, you need a great sales process that even mediocre salespeople can implement.

I had been searching for a sales manager for about 18 months when someone gave me this priceless piece of advice. I had gone through several rounds of expensive recruitment in different cities and made two even more expensive bad hires. The advice came from someone who specialises in sales when I asked him about recruitment and what I was doing wrong. He told me a gun salesperson is as rare as hens' teeth so don't waste your time looking for one. The much easier and smarter option is to nail a great sales process which you can eventually train other people to do.

This one piece of advice has saved me so much time, effort and money. Rather than running any more ads, I set about creating a process that is extremely detailed and maps out a system of lead generation, emails, questionnaires, phone calls and dealing with objections. The best part is I can easily hand over a good portion of the process to other people on my team. This frees up my time and saves the business from being reliant on a single salesperson who might leave and take all their natural sales ability with them.

Free BONUS GIFT

Sue Papadoulis has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$49.00 to all readers of this book.

The Publicity Checklist — Getting publicity for your business can be a costly experience, so it's vital you do it right. The Publicity Checklist by Sue Papadoulis shares seven key factors that will help you stand out from the crowd and make your publicity campaign a success. Read each step then tick off each item on the checklist to significantly increase the likelihood of getting publicity.

Simply visit the web page below and follow the directions to download:

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FRANCHISE ACTION



BRIAN KEEN

“ Franchise Simply also sponsors MicroLoan Foundation Australia. I founded this in 2009 to provide microloans to women in sub-Saharan Africa. The charity helps them start their own business. To date, we’ve provided over 31,000 loans. ”

Brian Keen.

BRIAN KEEN

Born and raised in London, Brian Keen attended Hammersmith College of Arts & Building. He earned qualifications as a quantity surveyor before opening his own construction business in Malawi, Central Africa.

In 1975, Brian and his wife Prue immigrated to Perth and launched Brian Keen Homes. After the recession of the early eighties, Brian switched his focus to retail, buying his first Bedshed franchise outlet. He went on to open and operate seven Bedshed stores in just five years.

His detailed retail expansion knowledge led Brian to become a franchising consultant and set up The Franchise Alliance. This consultancy helped household names like Brumby's, UltraTune, Jim's Mowing and Donut King develop successful sales strategies and franchise systems. During his time with The Franchise Alliance, Brian also used those same strategies and systems to build up six of his own franchise groups, with over 120 outlets between them.

Brian now brings all his knowledge in business and franchising together in his latest venture, Franchise Simply. This progressive business aims to show business owners how to transform a concept or family-sized firm into a multi-million dollar asset through a unique four-step system which clarifies and simplifies the franchising process.

Brian is passionate about helping people become financially secure and independently wealthy by setting up their own business wherever they are and whatever their background. For this reason, he also founded and became Chairman of MicroLoan Foundation Australia, a charity which gives small loans to women in Africa to help them start their own business. To date, the foundation has provided over 31,000 loans (a total of \$2.4 million) and has enabled close to 100,000 dependents to lift themselves from poverty.

When did you first discover your passion for business?

I had my first job when I was nine, delivering newspapers and milk to earn money to pay for things I wanted — a bike, trendy clothes, music. It wasn't long before I was offered a job in a modern menswear shop that went on to become a trendsetter in Carnaby Street, the hub of 1960's London pop fashion, which I absolutely loved. We customised everything, adding colourful squares to the pockets of suits and charging a fortune for the resulting 'one-off'.

The owner taught me the fundamentals of business. "Don't be afraid of competition," he would say. "All the other shops down the street will do the advertising, bringing punters to browse the street. Your job is to make sure your product is better and offers the best value. The customers will come back to buy when they have had enough of browsing."

I didn't go into business for myself at that stage. Instead, I went on to college to become a quantity surveyor before starting work in London.

Tell us about your early career and a few of your major achievements?

After a few years, I became bored of working in London so I decided to migrate to Africa and work as a quantity surveyor in South Africa, Zambia and Malawi.

At 24, I decided I really wanted to be in business myself. I wanted to construct buildings rather than just creating the specs for others to reap the rewards so I started Keen Construction in Malawi. This is where I met my wife Prue and where our two beautiful daughters were born. By the time they arrived, I had started four businesses.

We decided to leave Malawi and immigrate to Perth in 1975. As we were not permitted to bring any money, we arrived like many

“ Everything was wonderful until the recession hit in the early eighties. ”

Keen Construction and Brian Keen Homes. Everything was wonderful until the recession hit in the early eighties. As a result, I had to find another way to make a living and this led me to become a Bedshed franchisee.

Five years later, I had opened or bought out seven Bedshed outlets. I was ready for a new challenge so I decided to leave the company and become a business broker specialising in franchise sales. I was soon joined by my partners Johnny Allison and John Brown. We decided we should become franchise consultants. Our business, The Franchise Alliance, offered full service to the franchise industry.

We ran The Franchise Alliance for years, consulting to a wide range of business owners, helping them franchise their businesses and helping many of the well-known names take the next step in their franchise journey. We helped Jim's Mowing to open its West Australian Master Franchise in Perth and worked closely with many others including Eagle Boys, Brumby's, Donut King, Ultra Tune, Berklee Mufflers, Domino's and Midas.

Oddly enough, we then franchised The Franchise Alliance, opening outlets in every state in Australia and New Zealand. Encouraged by what we saw, we established six of our own franchise groups. One of them, Expense Reduction Analysts, now operates in 27 countries.

I have continued to work in the franchise industry as a consultant since then.

migrants, with nothing except the things we were able to ship.

I worked for a development company as a site supervisor to gain local experience during the early days in Perth. It wasn't long before I decided to go into business myself and established

What made you decide to become a franchisor and what did you learn from the experience?

When we first established The Franchise Alliance in the late eighties, Perth was still experiencing the end of the recession and many corporate businesses were laying off staff. This group of people were cashed up but not business savvy. For them, buying a franchise was a great way to get into business in a safer way than trying to start up on their own. However, most of the franchises available at the time were not suitable as this group either didn't have the right skills or weren't attracted to ice creameries or typical service businesses such as lawn mowing. My business partners and I decided we needed to start up franchises of our own to meet the need.

We established six groups, which we grew to 120 outlets. Some, like Pressed4Time and Leasehold Analysis International, were bought out by the competition and no longer operate on their own. Others, like Expense Reduction Analysts, have been taken to 27 countries overseas. The UK branch alone turns over in excess of \$25 million each year in consulting fees.

What made you decide to start your current business?

I have to confess — retirement does not suit me.

When looking for a new venture in 2011, Prue and I attended a workshop on internet marketing. We realised we could use many of the internet marketing concepts shared in the workshop to break the traditional, expensive model of franchising. Experience had shown me that although every business is different the steps needed to franchise are the same.

Describe the work you do and the value it provides to your clients.

We decided we should establish Franchise Simply to streamline franchise consulting and make the process clear, cost-effective and successful.

We documented each step in our simple 4D Franchise Success Path and put this program up on a website, which was delivered with considerable support from myself and my team.

We deliver our Franchise Success Path Programs to:

1. Clearly document the steps you need to take to create a franchised business. These are delivered in both softcopy and hardcopy format, along with guides and supporting material.
2. Give prospective franchisors a view of the big picture. We demonstrate why they need to cover each issue in sequence during a two-day workshop.
3. Provide specialist input from our team of franchise savvy experts. Branding, corporate structures, budgets and fees, territories, support, documentation and legal framework are some of the areas where we provide advice.
4. Deliver help to people as they work through the steps via Skype or phone mentoring sessions. Where necessary, I am involved in each step, along with relevant specialists. This makes sure the information being shared is appropriate for the franchise model being developed.

Individual business owners can put together a franchise package that suits them and their business. We offer a flexible model which allows some to choose to do all the work themselves and others choose to let us do it for them. Most choose something in the middle.

Franchise Simply also sponsors MicroLoan Foundation Australia. I founded this in 2009 to provide microloans to women in sub-Saharan

Africa. The charity helps them start their own business and lift themselves from poverty. To date, we've provided over 31,000 loans.

When should a business start thinking about franchising?

Businesses should have franchising in mind from the beginning. However, this is said with some provisos.

The thing about a franchised business is that a franchisor is responsible not just for running their own business, but for making sure their franchisees can run their businesses profitably. This means a franchisor really needs to be experienced in business so they can offer the support franchisees need.

If you are new to business, the focus should be to get the right experience under your belt and not worry about the complexities of growth and franchising for the time being.

However, if you have been in business for a while and you are looking to set up a new business or take your existing business to the next stage, structuring it like a franchise is absolutely the way to go.

Provided I am dealing with an experienced business owner, I know it is absolutely possible to establish a franchised business from concept. The myth saying you have to run a business for a number of years to prove profitability has been disproved on many occasions.

The benefits of franchising from the get-go are significant. You will get the brand right and clarify exactly what it is you are supplying your target market. Most business owners have a tendency to keep adding bits, complicating things and not appealing to a clear target market. You can't do this in a franchise if you want to be successful, for myriad reasons.

By clarifying exactly what it is your franchisees or company stores will be doing, you will simplify your business, reducing inventory and services and making it easier to run.

Franchises are systemised. Systemisation underpinned by great operations manuals is the foundation of delegation. With systems, you can put on people to do pretty much everything. This leaves you to take that well-earned holiday you have been promising your family.

Systems are also the foundation for growth, whether you choose to establish corporate stores or franchise. Invariably, those who run their business in this way increase profitability and are able to move themselves out of the humdrum of working in the business rather than on it.

If you are thinking about franchising, I suggest you get a free copy of my book, *How to Franchise My Business Simply*, from my website.

What is the difference between franchising and licensing and when should someone consider licensing over franchising?

In Australia, the definition of whether you are operating a licence as opposed to a franchise is determined by the 'Four Part Licence vs. Franchise test' set by the ACCC (Australian Competition & Consumer Commission).

This test is actually five questions. If the answer is 'yes' to any four, then your business is a franchise and you have to manage it as such, with all the associated responsibilities and legal framework.

1. Is there an agreement? (Written, oral or implied)
2. Is there an association with a trademark?
3. Is there an initial or continuing fee?
4. a) Is there a system to follow?
b) Is there a marketing plan to follow?

For further details, download a copy of the ACCC Franchising Code of Conduct.

Essentially, licensing offers the easiest business model to manage. Your licensees will be totally responsible for the way they market and look after your product. However, the downside is that you will have very little control over how they do this. The result can be disappointing.

Once you understand the legal foundation, you can think about which system will suit you best. Understanding the advantages and disadvantages will help you to make up your mind.

I recommend you listen to my Franchise Radio Show, which features an interview with Emma Jervis from LegalVision specifically on Franchising vs. Licensing. You can access it by visiting <https://franchisesimply.com.au/news/radio-shows/>.

Why do you think franchising can be such a daunting experience for people?

There are a number of reasons for people to shy away from franchising. Firstly, most people have no idea what franchising really involves. They know that they need to work out fees and territories and that they need a legal agreement, but that is about it.

Also, it is difficult to get impartial and experienced advice. Many professionals who work with business owners are often not any better informed than they are. Accountants tend to automatically advise against franchising because they do not actually understand the different discipline of franchise business accounting. Without franchise expertise, lawyers, bankers and other consultants are not much more help.

“ Without franchise expertise, lawyers, bankers and other consultants are not much more help. ”

Unfortunately, this lack of understanding about franchising is fuelled by the press commenting on a couple of the more blatant failures, which have recently hit the headlines. I do not support what has happened to the franchises, which have publicly struggled with a series of problems. In my view, in every case the issue goes back to franchisor hubris and greed, resulting in the group being managed with completely the wrong balance. Franchisee support and looking after the profitability of the whole group is one of the fundamental responsibilities of a franchisor. Overlook it at your peril.

Which takes me to my next point. When people start to become aware of their responsibilities as a franchisor, they often move away from it. A franchised business is actually made up of two business entities — a franchisee business supplying the product or service to the customer, and a franchisor business looking after franchisees and the group as a whole.

The transition from business owner to franchisor means that you will move from serving customers, cleaning and dealing with the day-to-day to looking after people. As Eagle Boys Pizza Founder Tom Potter said about his transition to franchising, “I have moved from the pizza business to the people business.”

This is a tricky relationship, franchisees are actually business partners, not employees or contractors, albeit operating within the framework of a legal agreement. They are the ones responsible for bringing in the money, paying you your share for the security of your brand and the services you provide them. They understandably get riled about not receiving the help they need or being put into a territory where they are on a highway to nothing when trying to make a profit.

The trick to getting it right is making sure you learn about what makes a franchise successful and then working with your franchisees to make it happen. The absolute key is to get happy franchisees. As Greg Nathan from Franchise Relationships says, “Happy franchisees

are profitable franchisees and profitable franchisees are happy franchisees.”

If someone has made the decision to explore franchising, what should their first steps be?

The first thing you need to do is learn about franchising. I cannot stress enough that it is important to understand the legal and ethical elements of running a franchised business and what is involved in setting one up. Not knowing what you are up for can lead to so many problems and unnecessary expenses.

There are many places to go to get information. Griffith University and the Franchise Council of Australia both run courses you can look into.

I also run a two-day Franchise Training Workshop a few times a year. This takes you through the essential steps and responsibilities of franchising successfully and gives you a pragmatic, commercially sound view of franchising.

How much does it cost for someone to franchise their business?

The cost of franchising a business is usually somewhere between \$55,000 and \$150,000. It can cost as much as \$200,000, depending on what type of business you have and who you go to for help.

As a guide, here is a typical cost break down:

Feasibility Study	\$12,000 – \$30,000
Choosing franchise model and structure	\$5,000 – \$12,500
Franchise Agreement	\$10,000 – \$35,000
Disclosure Document	\$3,000 – \$10,000

General Legal Advice – IP and Trade Mark protection, etc	\$5,000 – \$10,000
Operations Manual	\$10,000 – \$30,000
Marketing Plan	\$5,000 – \$11,500
Sales package, process and training	\$5,000 – \$12,000
Total	\$55,000 – \$150,000

My business helps other business owners to franchise through our carefully documented, in the cloud, Franchise Simply Franchise Success Path. This is supported by specialist franchise experts, with options from about \$20,000 to about \$80,000, depending on what you need.

Our system also covers additional business planning and advice on other things such as setting up your territories, effectively selling your franchises, and changing management style. We even look at mindset, a critical but little acknowledged element.

What have you learnt about selecting the right franchisees and how do you go about attracting the right type of people to run your outlets?

I cannot stress enough how essential it is to select the right franchisees to run your outlets.

You need people who will take complete responsibility for delivering your product or service to your valued clients in the way you specify. Every franchise outlet needs to look the same, feel the same and offer the same level of service.

You cannot afford to simply recruit anyone who offers you money. Not everyone can work within a strictly controlled system such as a franchise.

These are my tips for businesses looking to recruit franchisees:

1. Work out the personality and skill profile you want your franchisees to have. It is tempting to think you need someone like yourself. The trouble is, as a business owner wanting to franchise, your personality is probably a little direct, driven, risky, and decision focused. This is the last thing you want in your franchisees. They need to be technicians, happy to follow rules but with enough drive to make their businesses work within your framework.
2. Look for someone who is — or can be trained to be — skilled enough to do the job well. A cleaner, for instance, needs to have a keen eye for detail and take pride in having everything sparkle. They need to be pragmatic enough to know how to get the job done in time but probably don't need to have strong people skills as they will be working generally when places are empty. On the other hand, someone in a marketing franchise will need to have a background in the industry and a love of working with people.
3. Franchisees run their own businesses so they need to understand how to do this effectively. However, some personalities will have great difficulty in doing some aspects of business, and you, the franchisor, may decide to take responsibility for some tasks. In the early days, Jim Penman of Jim's Mowing decided he did not want his lawn mowing contractors to organise their next jobs or even do their own bookwork. He wanted them to be pushing a lawnmower, earning money for both themselves and the franchise group. So he set up a 131 number and had jobs allocated by the central office. Invoicing, and all the marketing gets taken care of by the central office too.

You need to think carefully about what you want your franchisees to do as you separate the tasks between both sides of the franchise group. Working out what you want as you build your franchise concept is essential.

“ At the end, if you think a potential franchisee is a ‘maybe’ — the answer should really be no. ”

complain to head office. One bad outlet can have an impact on the whole group.

A disgruntled franchisee can also have a huge impact on the other franchisees, making the work of your support team seem impossible. If your legal agreements have been written correctly, you will have ways to deal with these situations, but the stress and damage caused can be painful.

You need to go through a carefully thought out and detailed recruitment process. However, as you go about advertising for franchisees and whomever you use to bring them in, you need to make the decisions based on facts.

At the end, if you think a potential franchisee is a ‘maybe’ — the answer should really be no.

Once you have signed a franchisee, what do you do to ensure they succeed or to improve their chances of success?

As a franchisor, you need to implement a good induction process and follow it up with a great training and support system. Keep the following points in mind:

The wrong franchisees can cause much heartache for both you and your other franchise owners when they do not do the job the way you want it done. Your clients will suffer if they get a bad service or the shop they go into looks dirty and not on brand. They will complain, often on social media, which can make those complaints seem universal. Other franchisees will be affected by the bad publicity and

1. Base your model on a good legal foundation so everyone knows what is what.
2. An absence of great support is one of the major reasons franchises fail.
3. Your support needs to be based on your ability to listen with empathy, to be able to do your part of the job and to be direct about what all parties are responsible for.

As the head of a franchise, you should offer great support through:

- *Good systems* — The operations manuals need to work and be kept up to date. It surprised me at a recent conference to hear franchisors from well-established groups admit they could not get their franchisees to use their manuals. I am betting the manuals had been prepared by someone outside the organisation who tried to squeeze in every detail and ended up creating documents so large and unwieldy that they could not be used. Keep it relevant, simple and definitely in the cloud so systems are linked, accessible and searchable, with permissions that apply to the roles.
- *Regular reporting both ways* — Your franchisees need to report to you so you know what is going on. You need to report to them so they know too. Be transparent.
- *Formal and informal avenues for contact* — Allow your franchisees to get in touch via phone calls, meetings on site, meetings in groups, annual and other get-togethers. This helps everyone to run well and build the business as a team.

Probably most importantly, you need to get the money right. This is the other major reason leading to franchise failures. You need to get your franchise structures right and make sure both sides of the group can be profitable in the long term.

The upfront price of your franchise needs to reflect market value and be fair. The ongoing fees need to cover all the support you need to

provide over the long term. Remember to take into account reviewing and refreshing your brand and franchise structure from time to time.

Both you and your franchisees need to be profitable or it won't work.

When it comes to expanding, how fast should you go?

I have been involved with franchise groups with as few as two outlets and others with as many as 150 and still growing. The key when it comes to growth is to keep it sustainable.

Most new franchisors start with one to three outlets and then stop for a while to review everything. My experience is that this initial pause is essential in almost every case. No matter how hard you have tried to get everything perfect, once you open your first outlets, you will have to make changes to your model and systems.

I have seen cases where the initial expectation has been that the franchisee will do all the local marketing, picking up the phone and making cold calls, organising meetings and so on. The problem is, your franchisees may not have the outgoing personality needed to take that job on. As a result, leads decline. The franchisor has to expand their marketing efforts to take on the local marketing for each franchisee, charging for the service.

In one case, I had a client come to me through an Expo in August, start the Franchise Program in January and exhibit at the next Expo in March. This very popular franchise started fast and put on many new franchises in the first year. They continued to expand, looking to move to the States in the second year. The group has had to make changes on the run, but they have done really well. However, the stress of moving this fast in an environment where they had to make significant changes to the model and systems has caused its fair share of problems. Without a sound partnership at board and management level it would not have been so successful.

On the other hand, I have clients who want to expand but have been stuck honing the system with only three outlets forever. The reality is perfection is not attainable in the franchise world because things will keep changing around you. Your systems and operations manuals will always be a work in progress so if you want to expand you do have to do so without everything in place, especially at the beginning.

Generally, the key is to open your first few outlets fast and test your systems on them. Once you are reasonably sure you have the mix right, expand as fast or slow as you are able to put in the support systems to service new outlets.

What are the five biggest mistakes that most people make when franchising?

In my mind, the following mistakes all come under the umbrella of not understanding what a franchise is all about.

Mistake One — Thinking the existing business will form the franchise outlet and only getting a legal agreement and operations manual based on that. Invariably, to be successful as a franchise, you are going to have to make significant changes to your existing business, simplifying it around the specific needs of your target market and the likely skills of your future franchisees. As a business owner, you almost certainly have a spark of entrepreneurial spirit, with a tendency to keep adding things to your simple business idea. You do not want your franchisees to be as free-spirited as you. They need to follow the rules.

Mistake Two — Not understanding a franchise group is comprised of two business entities — your franchisee outlets and your franchisor business. Balancing the interaction between the two makes for a successful franchise. The franchise legislation only requires you to prepare legal agreements and operations manuals around your franchise outlets. However, to run your franchises successfully, you

really need to make sure you develop your whole franchise system so that all the interacting subsystems pull together as one.

Example franchise system — Franchisor / Outlet responsibilities	
Franchisor business	Franchise outlets
Look after the brand	Delivery of product or service to client
Some local marketing for franchisees	Some local marketing
Manage support systems (operations manuals)	Recruit, train and manage staff
Provide induction, support and training	Manage their franchisee business
Keep franchisees accountable	Provide data to the franchisor
Supply of product to franchisees	
Recruit new franchisees	
Manage your franchisor business	

Note — the franchisor list is longer...

If you do not plan how you are going to look after the interacting aspects of the brand, local marketing, induction, support and training and supply of any product to franchisees, your franchisor business will not perform as it should.

Mistake Three — Not balancing your franchisees’ personality and skill profiles with the tasks needed in each franchise outlet. New

franchisors without an understanding of franchising will really not understand the interaction between franchisee profile and the tasks you expect your franchisees to do in servicing your clients. They will just recruit anyone in the same way as they recruit staff, which doesn't provide optimal results.

Mistake Four — Not getting the money right. Everyone will suffer if you do not go through detailed budgets for every part of the franchise structure to make sure you have a handle on:

1. What each person will do
2. The territory they will cover
3. How much it is going to cost to run each part of the franchise
4. How much each franchisor service to franchisees will cost
5. What fees and charges will be imposed

Does franchising change when you're taking on franchisees from other states or countries?

Expanding interstate or internationally definitely has different requirements.

First of all, as you expand to this level it is likely your franchise structure will need to expand to include another level — the Master Franchise. You will need to add someone in each state or country to take on the role of franchisor and all the responsibilities for support and franchise management. New agreements and new budgets will be required to take this new level of management into account.

Second, you will have to be open to change. Even in Australia, experience has shown me that you cannot take a franchise from one state to another without being aware of the different culture. Yes, Melbourne is different to Perth and you probably do need a local area

manager or franchisor to look after the new outlets as they expand from city to city.

Obviously, the differences will be greater with expansion to other countries. Australia is littered with examples of American franchises, which have struggled or not succeeded here because they were not adjusted to meet local tastes. Subway and Domino's were examples in their early days as well as Krispy Kreme and Starbucks.

What are some notable success stories from clients you have worked with?

Over the years I have seen incredible growth from franchise groups growing so there are a huge number of success stories.

With our latest venture Franchise Simply, three examples stand out.

Mobile Remedial Massage

Twelve years ago, Sandra Allars decided she needed a skill so she could begin to build a business around her busy home and three small children. She went back to school to become a remedial massage therapist.

Sandra is caring, professional and very good at her job. It wasn't long before her business Soothe Mobile Massage expanded and she was employing staff. These were mainly women who wanted to work in a structure which would also give them time to focus on their families.

By 2015, Soothe had grown to the point where Sandra could not manage it alone. Her husband Simon joined the team and together they decided the time had come to franchise.

Over the next year, they worked hard to restructure the business, establish the necessary systems and bring on three franchise partners. The surprising bonus for them was the fact that their already very

successful business grew by a whopping 270 per cent during that 12 months. This was all due to the work they put in to create a well-structured franchise system.

This is the beginning of Sandra's dream coming true.

A commercial and domestic cleaning business

Shannon Daniels joined our program a few years ago, not sure if he wanted to franchise or not but knowing he wanted his business, Triumphant Property Services, to operate like a franchised business.

"My business had evolved from supply and demand," says Shannon. "It was only when I started the franchise program and, for the first time, analysed the services we provided more closely that I realised domestic cleaning, just one part of our business, was disproportionately time-consuming with lower ROI than the more specialised commercial aspects."

Shannon stopped offering that service. As a result, the team became instantly more profitable.

By cutting out a large part of the service offered, Shannon grew his business 48 per cent in six months and saw its value increase by \$1.5 million. He eventually sold the business for a well-deserved profit after being approached by a national operator.

Drone Franchise

I was approached at an Expo in August a few years ago by two experienced businessmen wanting to establish a franchise for a new concept around drones. I was immediately captivated by both their concept and the expertise shown by both partners and my first impression was not wrong. By the following March, the company was exhibiting at the next Expo, looking to recruit franchisees. The business has grown hand over fist and is now expanding into the US.

These examples are just three of many. Our KPIs show that a whopping 90 per cent of our clients are successful in one way or another. Some, like Shannon, use the model to restructure the business to sell. Others, like Sandra, go on to create the franchised business of their dreams.

Free BONUS GIFT

Brian Keen has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$19.95 to all readers of this book.

How to Franchise My Business Simply — In this ebook, Brian Keen outlines the four simple steps and the true costs of taking the franchise path. You'll learn how to determine the best franchise method for your business and discover the right way to find the best franchisees without making common selection mistakes.

Simply visit the web page below and follow the directions to download:

www.SecretsExposed.com.au/business-experts

MODEL OF SUCCESS



SIMON BOWEN

“ The *worst* thing any business owner could do right now is to assume the big changes are still a long way off. The *best* thing a business owner could do is assume they are imminent and prepare accordingly. ”

SIMON BOWEN

Simon Bowen was born near the Western Australian gold mining town of Kalgoorlie. Growing up in the country instilled a set of values that last to this day. 'Help your neighbour, volunteer, work hard, play sport and be a part of the town' were the mainstay of what living in the country meant to Simon.

After an early career in electrics and electronics, Simon completed his tertiary studies in teaching before taking on lecturing roles in TAFE and university. This eventually led him to take on corporate positions in the fields of organisational development and change management. After spending several years as an executive at CSR and working across sales, organisational development and human resources, Simon was inspired to establish his own corporate consulting business.

With a strong belief in the positive power of enterprise to do good, Simon has invested over two decades in facilitating the resolution of complex issues for organisations of all sizes and across all sectors.

Highly regarded for the results he achieves when he oversees large projects, Simon is actively sought out to individually mentor many CEOs, heads of government, and industry/business leaders. In challenging environments, Simon has been the go-to-person, especially when there is an expectation that an issue will draw multiple, disparate and conflict-driven views.

Dynamic and thought-provoking, Simon's creativity and enthusiasm make him the perfect catalyst for business success. A gifted speaker and published author, Simon is known for making the complex simple, to both solve a problem and sell a better option.

In all his work, Simon has one goal — to transform any complex issue at the base level and influence others to support it.

When did you first discover your passion for business?

So much of who we are is crafted in our youth. My father was a senior public administrator in country towns around Western Australia, but my mother was an entrepreneur. She opened a coffee shop and lunch bar before establishing a health food and alternative medicine business in the central wheat belt in the seventies, which was really ahead of its time. She then started a beauty therapy business. Imagine the farmers wondering why their wives could possibly need manicures!

Eventually, my father left public service and became an AMP Life Insurance Agent running his own agency. He used to say he never liked sales, yet he was one of AMP's highest producers during the years he ran the agency. One day, I asked him how he could be one of their highest producers if he didn't like sales and his reply was typically country in its nature. He said, "I never sell anything to anyone Simon. I just tell them the best thing they could do to protect their families and assets and because they trust me they buy the insurance." Such old wisdom!

My father eventually also started a bedroom furniture store and ran that very successfully for many years. My siblings and I used to work in our parents' various businesses and in country towns. In these places, if you get it wrong or the service is poor, there is no place to hide. Country values of honesty and helpfulness apply!

In hindsight, I guess I never really discovered a passion for business. It was instilled in me in my youth and I never questioned or doubted it.

What was your very first significant job and what did it teach you?

After I left school I wanted to get to the city to play sport. I was very serious about my hockey and had made the under-21 state representative team. Going to university was a good way to get to the

“ Business is always about people and connection. Care about all the people your business touches and they will care about you. ”

would say, “Have a go and then ask me about what you can’t figure out for yourself.”

I loved the trade. It was where my first association with visual models to explain complex concepts was born. It is impossible to work through a complex electrical or electronic problem without the circuit diagram. The circuit diagram is the visual model that represents the complexity of the concept.

I was Western Australian Apprentice of the Year for each year of my apprenticeship and I wasn’t the first one that Kelvin had trained into that level of success. He was an incredible first employer to work for and I have been in contact with him my whole working life.

He was at my father’s funeral and came up behind me and asked, “How are you doing son?” We chatted and then I asked him how he did it. How had he been able to have so much impact on so many apprentices and get them trained up to be such outstanding tradesmen? His reply was profound. He said, “Oh! Simon, I was never training apprentices, I was always growing young men!”

Wow! There’s the lesson. Business is always about people and connection. Care about all the people your business touches and they will care about you.

city, but I was a country boy at heart and I found leaving home too hard.

As is the way in the country, a friend of my father’s offered me a job to train as an automotive electrician. We fixed everything — boats, caravans, trailers, cars, trucks, tractors, headers, railway equipment, power generators for houses, vintage cars, heavy plant and even an army tank. Every time I saw something new, my boss Kelvin

Tell us about your early career and what were your major achievements?

After my early stint as a tradesman, I eventually moved to the city. I worked in several workshops until I became a service adviser and then service manager in a Nissan dealership.

Eventually, I thought I would like to teach. This was the first realisation that in my heart, I am a teacher. It is what I have spent my life doing. I studied my Bachelor of Education to teach in high school, but my early experiences in front of high school students helped me to see that I was not vocationally cut out to work with teenagers.

I had to teach adults. I did a second degree in Adult Education and Training and lectured in TAFE and university, which allowed me to follow Kelvin's example and grow young people. During that time, I also completed my Graduate Diploma in Business.

Armed with my qualifications, I sold fee-for-service training to industry and also became involved in change management facilitation within the education sector. This led to my involvement with the corporatisation of the Water Authority in Western Australia, shifting a government utility into a commercial trading entity. My involvement was in the culture change aspects of that shift. This was a major project to be involved with and has been incredibly successful for many years now.

From the Water Authority, I was recruited to CSR Gyprock Bradford. I was made second in charge and was immediately asked to merge the Gyprock Bradford, Hebel Building Block, Monier Roofing and CSR Timber businesses in WA into one business unit — CSR Building Materials.

In this role, I ran the sales team, took care of Human Resources within WA and delivered leadership and sales training for CSR around the country. I loved the job — we had some big wins, especially in sales.

The role led me to establish our corporate consulting business, which we have now operated for nearly 25 years.

Over those 25 years, we have been privileged to work on some huge projects, including:

- Industry wide export strategies
- Whole of city planning
- Major public infrastructure builds (a 60,000 seat stadium being the biggest)
- Strategic planning for companies like BHP, Austal Ships and Boral
- Major change programs across entire companies or government agencies
- Countless sales and leadership development strategies

Who were your biggest business mentors? What important lessons have you learnt from them?

My first employer, Kelvin, was a significant mentor who helped me understand the real purpose of business — to serve!

My father-in-law was also a very significant business mentor. Don was a successful, high-profile international company executive, running Miles Laboratories (best known for Alka-Seltzer) in the UK and Australia. He used to tell me that everything can be measured if you don't become too fascinated with statistical purity. He was more interested in observable evidence as a measure than pure statistics. He also paid attention to people. One day, I asked him what he thought was the most important thing to do in business. He said, "Three things — make something people really need, serve them exceptionally well and really look after your people!" Again, business is about people.

The last mentor I should mention was my old boss at CSR, Brent Baker. He was an international business executive running the \$1 billion CSR Building Materials Business Unit. Everyone warned me to never get caught in the car with him by myself because he would almost certainly ask me a question I wouldn't know the answer to.

Well, it happened, I got caught by myself with him and he asked me a question I didn't know the answer to. All I could do was fess up and tell him I didn't know! His response, "That was the best answer you could have given me Simon." Brent became a mentor and nurtured my leadership skills.

On a visit to one of our factories, Brent went up to almost every person. He addressed them by name and then went on to ask each of them about something personal that had been important to them the last time he visited. He even spoke fluent Spanish to one of our employees, who then burst into tears. I asked Brent what that was about and he said that the employee's wife had been diagnosed with breast cancer the last time Brent was over, and he wanted to know how she was — thankfully she was in recovery.

These were things about my staff that neither I nor the Production Manager knew. I asked Brent how he could possibly know so much about our people. He pulled out a small notebook and said, "I made notes after the last visit and then I studied them on the plane on the way over."

Our people were that important to him. Perhaps more importantly, over the years it became obvious our people would do anything for Brent in return, including defying the union!

What made you decide to start your current business?

Starting our consultancy was a combination of frustration and growth. I knew I was always going to end up in my own business and when

it happened it was time. We had just had our third daughter and I needed to be travelling less.

I was also becoming increasingly frustrated with the impersonal, often inexperienced advice we were getting from consultants that the company used. To be blunt, I thought I could do a better job.

Describe to us the work you do and the value it provides to your clients.

We serve business leaders.

The two most important things that leaders in business do is think and influence. Michael Gerber says that every business is only as good as the idea on which it is built, and I agree with him. I would add, it is also only as good as the continued quality of thinking behind that idea.

If the idea is strong, leaders must influence the choices others make to support that idea. This includes the choice employees make to perform impeccably, the choice customers make to buy, the choice suppliers make to serve, the choices regulators make to allow you to operate and the choices investors and banks make to support your business.

Business is complex, often contentious and almost always challenging. Yet, we rely almost exclusively on the limited, two dimensional and linear nature of language to work through our thinking and then sell the idea to others.

Over more than 25 years, I have taught, facilitated and helped people solve problems by moving to a highly visual and dynamic process of thinking and communication. We call it the Models Method.

Business leaders come to me to help them completely shift the way their business thinks and communicates. Their goal is to out-think,

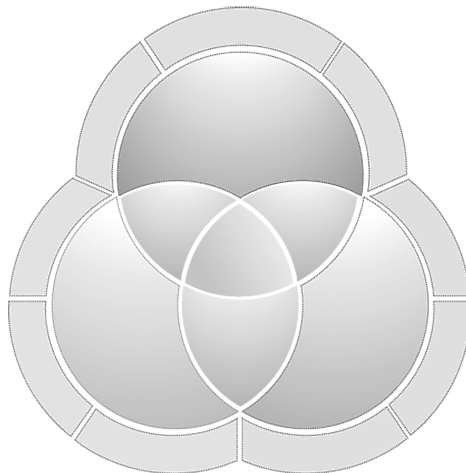
out-sell and out-serve their market place, and put the true genius of their business on show!

What are some notable success stories of clients that you have worked with?

The core sales story for any business should be about the customer, what they most need, the compelling and self-evident value the business delivers to them and the true, authentic genius the business brings to the table to deliver that value.

If a business can't claim genius in what they do, perhaps they shouldn't be doing it!

One of the most important visual models we have ever built is called The Genius Model. This places the customer right at the centre, at the heart of everything your business does. They are at the core of your business, rather than outside of your business. Everything in your business is about them and they can see a direct pathway from their deepest held desire, right through to the very practical things you do to fulfil that deepest held desire.



The Genius Model

Significantly, the Genius Model allows that entire conversation to happen in less than ten minutes, in even the most complex sales. Once seen, the customer can't un-see the promised solution. Perhaps even more importantly, models help anyone to get through the clumsiest part of any conversation.

We helped Steve Temelkovski, the National Sales Manager for Evoleder Innovations, build the Genius Model for his business. He wrote to us and said, "I would like to thank you for providing Evoleder Innovations with the training and opportunity to allow us to deliver our message in a unique interactive style to any prospect at any level. Since we applied the Genius Model and others to our sales presentations, we have managed to deliver a structured solution based presentation that is identical throughout the entire sales team. After only my 3rd presentation to a C level client with our unique Genius Model, I have managed to land a multinational public listed customer and multiple site upgrades with our unique range of Commercial LED Lighting Solutions valued over \$550,000."

Even done badly, a visual models based presentation will out-sell a verbal only presentation every time.

We've also helped one of the world's leading sales trainers to unpack his knowledge into a unique Genius Model. His comments were, "For the first time in ten years, I am able to explain exactly what I do in a way that people will get it, see it and truly understand the power of it."

On a bigger scale, I helped a \$1.6 billion international heavy industry manufacturing company create a Genius Model for a key component of a tender for a \$3 billion government contract. Whilst commercial confidentiality prevents specifics, my client won the manufacturing component of the contract.

How did you come to realise that selling successfully was less about talking and more about showing?

For nearly 25 years, I have been selling to corporations, governments, not-for-profits, the education sector and the military, to list a few. I am almost always offering services to support the client in resolving a complex and contentious situation in their business. Examples of these include strategic direction and positioning, sales strategies, organisational change, conflict resolution and broad public consultation.

I quickly discovered that as long as I simply spoke with the client, it left too many variables open in the discussion. As soon as I started to draw a model, the dynamic shifted from 'face-to-face selling' to side-by-side facilitation. The pressure was released and we were able to get to the truth more quickly. Using a model leaves a footprint of the discussion behind. It becomes an artefact of our conversation.

I am often selling in a situation where the first person I meet with is not the sole decision maker. The reality today is that in large companies there seldom is a single decision maker. Even the CEO will usually assemble a small think tank on key decisions. This means that the first person I meet must become a sales person for me. When we create a model together and that person has the artefact to take with them, they enter every subsequent conversation very differently than they would have if I had just had a verbal meeting with them.

If a proposal is required, my proposal will contain all the models we discussed. These will also be models that every other decision maker will have seen, delivered by the 'internal sales person' I set up inside their company. When they receive my proposal, it is already familiar and comfortable to them.

Most people flick through a proposal quickly first. The models literally jump off the page, models that they already know and have often

“ My biggest realisation is that none of us can be shallow and deep at the same time. ”

already discussed. They are already at a level of acceptance before they read the first word.

My biggest realisation is that none of us can be shallow and deep at the same time. In any purchase decision, basing the decision on price is a shallow thought process. The sales challenge is to take the thinking deeper to value.

The problem is, resistance is hard-wired! We have an automatic, self-protective mechanism for resistance. It's there to keep us safe and it is called our comfort zone. Subconsciously, if we resist dropping deeper into understanding we can protect ourselves from a more complex, costly or challenging decision.

When people buy on price alone, they are making a shallow decision to subconsciously keep themselves safe. Another way to look at this is to recognise that resistance is a shallow thought process and acceptance is a deep thought process.

To move people to be more accepting, we need to take them deep, without upsetting their comfort zone.

Visual models give us structure and a pathway that allows us to take another person towards that deeper level of realisation. It makes them familiar with the more complex and contentious aspects of the discussion and still allows us to have that discussion side-by-side.

With this method, instead of 'them and us' sitting across the table from each other, we sit beside each other working on a model together.

What is the most powerful thing about models?

Time and again, people tell us they used their models badly and still got a great result. That is perhaps the most powerful thing about a great model. It builds a level of confidence that is almost bulletproof.

The model reduces the need to be perfect in your delivery. It actually reduces the need to try and control the conversation. Instead, the model guides the discussion and all you need to do is facilitate and get the other person talking.

Models create clarity and speed of understanding. They turn the intangible into a very tangible representation. We see this when people tell us that one model, built in about ten minutes, has clarified what they have spent years trying to explain in words alone. Rather than having to continue to explain to people what you do, models allow you to *show* your genius. It also allows your customers to *see* your genius!

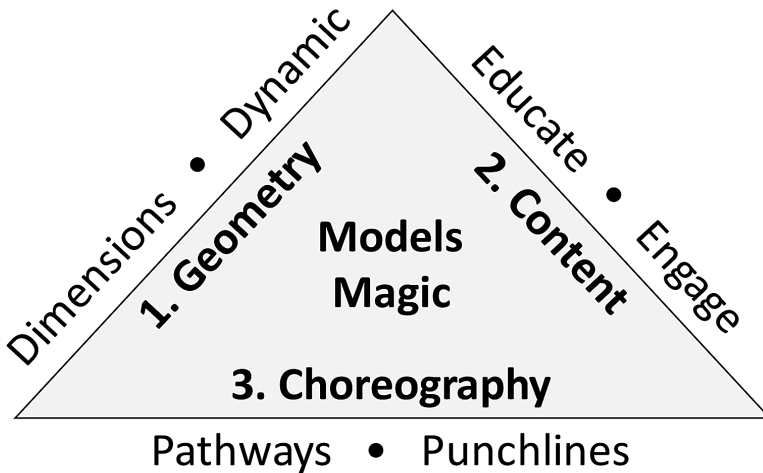
Can you give us an example of a sales model and when to use it?

A great model has three key components that give it power:

- *The geometry* — The geometry sets up the dynamic. For example, a triangle has a holistic dynamic. You need all three components for it to work. The geometry also tells us how many dimensions or variable there are. A triangle has three.
- *The content* — The content must both educate and engage. It needs to deliver clear messages and be curious. Word patterns and language really matters in a model.
- *The choreography* — Ultimately, the real magic in a model is in how it is delivered. Delivered well, a great model has a pathway that

it takes the customer through. It also delivers strong punchlines the customer can't ignore.

With this in mind, to talk about an example model that can be used in sales would require a deeper explanation of the choreography. Putting that aside, it is often useful to people to have a model that helps them to position price differently.

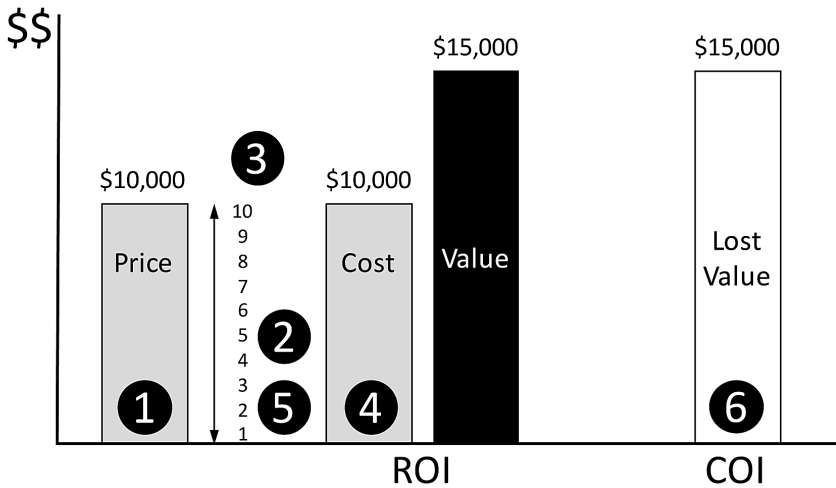


The Sales Model

There are two ways you can position price differently to the shallow conversation of 'cheapest'.

- You can position the price against the cost of doing nothing – the cost of inaction, or
- You can position price against the value of having the best solution in the market

A quick model that helps position the cost of inaction looks like this:



The Cost of Inaction Model

The choreography is very deliberate and any model works best if it is drawn live in front of the client. It should be delivered with the timing of a great comedy or magic show.

However, the model will still work even if poorly executed. The key conversational steps are:

1. The price for our product is \$10,000
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is cheap and 10 is costly, how do you feel about that? (most people say either 7 or 8)
3. Do you mind me asking, what's more important to you — the price or the cost? (This is a paradigm shifting question — most people respond that they don't know the difference)
4. Well, a *price* of \$10,000 is expensive and we know that our product will create at least \$15,000 worth of benefit/impact for you. The *cost* of accessing that solution is \$10,000. That's an ROI of 50 per

cent, which is pretty high. When I use the term ‘price versus cost’, that’s what I mean.

5. I wonder, how would you rate that cost of \$10,000 on the scale if it is returning at a rate of 50 per cent? (Most people come down to a 3 or 4)
6. But you know there is a much more significant cost isn’t there? (Most people don’t know what you are referring to so you should just keep going)
7. There is the cost of inaction, the COI. The lost value opportunity if we do nothing. We spend nothing but we also gain nothing. Does that make sense? (Most people agree)
8. If it is okay, I would love to spend just a few minutes exploring what that 50 per cent ROI might look like for you. Would that be okay?

This conversation takes the customer deeper than price and highlights multiple other issues that must be considered. The model is not a positioning model against other competitors, it is a model to position price against value.

When presenting sales models, how do you pre-frame them so people listen and stay engaged?

Even the best model becomes magical when the choreography is performed well. Like great drama, comedy or magic show, a good sales model takes the viewer along a pathway.

Models tell a story within a visual framework. The story always has a punchline and the punchline is where the biggest shifts occur.

Once seen, a model cannot be unseen.

For this reason, we recommend that businesses protect the intellectual property that is contained within a model. Models should be disguised

when used directly on the homepage of a website. However, the underlying structure of the model still makes the ‘deconstructed version’ much more powerful than normal sales copy.

Models are always best delivered in a conversation, one-to-one, from a stage or on a video-based medium. They work best when they are drawn by hand, rather than by PowerPoint or Keynote.

The process of drawing engages the customer and creates the side-by-side dynamic. When we draw, we draw people in! It is very common for the customer to pick up a pen and begin to draw on the model as well. As soon as that happens, the sale has been made. It is also very possible to ‘draw’ a model while on the phone.

Imagine a conversation that starts out with, “Value is a little bit like an iceberg. The top of the triangle is above the water line and can be seen, even measured. We all know the bigger, more significant portion is hidden below the waterline. It’s pretty obvious that the real value is not necessarily the part you can see. Would you like to explore what the part below the waterline looks like?”

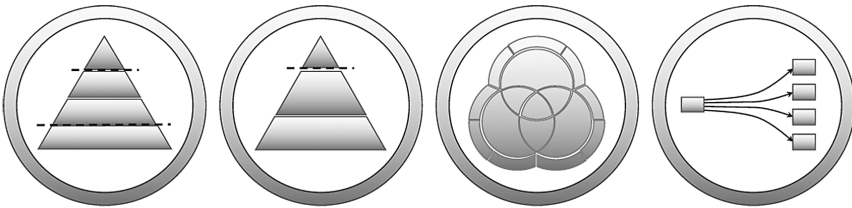
Models are flexible, powerful and incredibly influential when there is a sale to be made.

What types of models can you use during the sales process specifically?

There are ten key models that can be used in any sales process. They deal with price resistance, urgency and action, expression of value, understanding of need, objections, building buyer confidence and more.

Within the sales process, four models represent the core sales story:

- *The Client Pre-Frame Model (Who)* — This positions the prospect as a potential client and allows them to see that they are a real candidate for your product or service. It effectively allows them to ‘opt-in’ to the sales process.
- *The Deep Value Model (What)* — This model shifts the customer from shallow decision making at price level to deep decision making at the transformational value level. It positions you as the only company that really understands what they need.
- *The Genius Model (How)* — This lets the customer know how capable and deliberate the genius in your business is and how directly connected it is to their needs. This model puts them right at the centre of your business as the single, most important thing. Simon Sinek suggests that, “People don’t buy what you do until they know why you do it.” I respectfully suggest a change to that statement. I think it is more accurate to say, “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.” The Genius Model makes the person you are selling to the only reason for your business to exist.
- *The Four Futures Model (When)* — This creates a very visible and immediate sense of urgency that swiftly moves the customer to action.



The 4 Sales Process Models

In the moment when selling, how do you shift to a model and start building it?

Shifting into a sales model is the easiest transition that can be made in a sale. When people are trying to work through a decision, if someone says, “I think I can draw that for you,” they immediately become interested.

Drawing is the oldest form of communication. We’ve been using it since ancient civilisations. At that moment, when someone offers to draw out a complex issue, everyone intuitively wants to see what that looks like.

Once you start drawing, it becomes an open loop. No one lets anyone leave a half-finished drawing incomplete. It is typical for customers to demand to see the rest of the model if there is the potential it will be left unfinished.

“I think I can draw that for you!” It really is that simple.

What are the other places within a business where models can be used?

There are so many aspects of a business that require clarity of thought and speed of communication. Models will deliver both these outcomes in any circumstance.

We have built entire model based approaches to:

- Project management
- Performance management
- Leadership
- Marketing and sales

- Strategic planning
- Change management
- Process improvement

Even with all these examples, I am convinced this is just the tip of the iceberg!

What do you love most about being in a career helping business owners achieve greater levels of success?

I believe business and enterprise truly are two of the most powerful forces for good on the planet if held in the hands of the right leaders.

For so many, the business dream includes the idea of making a big difference, but often the complexity of business gets in the way of the dream. In all that complexity, great leadership often withers under the constant pressure of commercial challenge, changing circumstances, swiftly moving technological advancement and increasing customer expectations.

These business leaders are the pioneers, the risk takers, the crazy ones, as Steve Jobs so eloquently put it. They deserve support, they deserve to be able to feel just a little bit bulletproof, they deserve to feel like they can dominate their space and they deserve to have a business worth loving — and I know how to help them do that.

What's one of the best business strategies you've ever implemented for a client and why did it work so well?

Without question, the most powerful thing we have ever introduced to business is the shift to a visual models based way of thinking and communicating. Within the Models Method framework, the Genius Model has literally transformed businesses of all sizes, and across all

industries, as a result of the clarity and structure it brings to complex business conversations. It places the customer right at the heart of the business and lets them see the genius of the concept offered to them, as well as the contrast of consequences if they don't access that offer.

The Genius Model turns everyone in the business into a confident sales person.

Over the coming years, what do you see as the major challenges or opportunities facing businesses?

I facilitate companies through their strategic thinking process so I have to be across what is happening and what is coming. To best serve this, I belong to a number of futurist groups around the world and constantly tap into podcasts, read prolifically and stay connected to the forward thinkers of the world.

I am in no doubt that we are on the exponential edge of technology, social and political change. The world will pivot completely in the coming years and I think everything will change dramatically. The *worst* thing any business owner could do right now is to assume the big changes are still a long way off. The *best* thing a business owner could do is assume they are imminent and prepare accordingly.

You never get penalised for being early, but you are almost always penalised in some way, either reputationally or practically, for being late.

One of the changes we will see continue to evolve is the use of visual communication, video and non-linear exchange of information. Language is linear and I truly believe the reliance on a verbally dominant thinking and communication style will cost

“ I am in no doubt that we are on the exponential edge of technology, social and political change. ”

businesses. As automation, artificial intelligence, machine learning and workflow reengineering continue to pick up pace, the importance of high-quality thinking and high-impact influencing will become even more significant.

Free BONUS GIFT

Simon Bowen has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$267.00 to all readers of this book.

The Menu of Problems That Can Be Solved With Models — Compiled over 20 years, this list covers the most common problems that can be solved within a month to put money back in your pocket. As a bonus, Simon Bowen has included training videos which offer solutions to two of the most common issues that may be costing your business money.

Simply visit the web page below and follow the directions to download:

www.SecretsExposed.com.au/business-experts

WEALTHY & FREE



JOHN DI NATALE

“ We all love the stories of people who have overcome the odds to achieve incredible things. There's absolutely no reason you and I can't do the same. Almost every time, your biggest barrier is you. ”

John Di Natale

JOHN DI NATALE

John Di Natale grew up on a small farm in the town of Cockatoo in the Dandenongs outside Melbourne. His early years were spent watching his parents work hard to carve out a life for their family after migrating from Southern Italy years earlier.

John's parents were committed to ensuring he and his younger brother got a good education so they could get a 'good job' and not have to work as hard.

After completing a Bachelor of Arts and initially working in recruitment, training and consulting, John spent a few years on air at radio stations in regional Victoria. On returning to Melbourne, he joined a leading franchise consultancy and was introduced to this powerful methodology for business growth.

John's speaking and presentation skills secured him an international role with the Audi Academy. As part of the Asia Pacific team based out of Singapore, he worked throughout SE Asia, helping to strengthen the Audi brand profile in new markets and training staff from executive level through sales and after sales.

John's early financial 'education' taught him that money is hard to get so you have to land a good job, work hard and save to pay off your debts – and that honest people never get rich!

After many years of consulting to business owners and entrepreneurs in Australia and around the world, John realised that these views are entrenched in the mindset of many people. He began a new mission to share a more positive, encouraging view and a deeper understanding of money.

Together with his team at Equi Wealth, John now helps people understand and manage their money better so they can create a more fulfilling, more rewarding life.

What was your first significant job and what did it teach you?

The first job I ever really wanted was to be a radio announcer. In some ways, the process of getting the job taught me more than the job itself. I was in my early twenties and when I told my family and the people around me I wanted to be a radio DJ, the reaction was almost universally negative. First of all, why would I want to be on the radio when I had graduated from Monash University and could get a better job? Second, you can't just 'get' a radio job. You have to know people, you have to have talent, you have to be *born* for that kind of job. I was determined to prove I could do it. I went to radio school, learned how to operate a studio, recorded my demo tapes and started sending them out.

At the time, there were 27 radio stations in Victoria. I set up a roster and each month after I sent out my demo tapes, I would call at least one station a day to ask if they would give me a start. I did it for so many months that the program director at one station would laugh when I called, having realised that on the eighth of each month, I'd be on the phone. Then it happened. He answered the phone and said, "I've been expecting your call, you'd better come down and see me." Suddenly there I was, on the air for the first time, in the small coastal town of Warrnambool.

I've thought back on the lessons from this experience over the years. People will have expectations of you, they will try to have you meet those expectations — perhaps for their own sense of satisfaction or perhaps to protect you from disappointment. You can spend your life trying to meet those expectations or you can find what really lights you up and go after it. When you have a goal and you wholeheartedly commit to it, you can achieve much, much more than you give yourself credit for.

Success is the outcome of having a clear Goal, a Plan and applying consistent Action over a period of Time. In fact, I write it as a formula now to remind myself:

$$S = (G + P + A) \times T$$

Tell us a bit about where your business career began?

When I was in my mid-twenties, I had come back to Melbourne after a short radio career. Rather than go look for a 'normal' job, I decided to start a promotions business. I thought I could host and DJ at events and engage some of the radio personalities I knew to do the same. I rented a small office in Caulfield. I spent way too much time coming up with a name (although I was pretty proud of Jagged Edge Promotions at the time), designing my logo and spending money I didn't actually have on business cards, flyers and posters.

This was my first experience of the constant juggling act we do as business owners trying to manage marketing, sales, operations and finance — not to mention all the other distractions. Luckily this was in the late eighties, before that thing called the internet so I didn't spend months and months working on my website! I eventually got some gigs and I even managed to book some of those personalities, but I was a long way from making enough money to sustain the business. As a result, I soon clocked up my first failure on the road to success. I went on to own a franchised recruitment business (long before franchising had become trendy), then an education and training business. From there I owned a business growth consultancy and a business focusing on property and wealth creation followed from that.

What made you decide to start your current business?

For almost 30 years, I've worked with business owners. They have ranged from one-man-bands who are just getting started through to

franchisees and licensees of some of the biggest brands in Australia and the world. I've worked with people in Australia as well as seven countries across South East Asia. What's especially interesting is that no matter the country or culture, some things remain the same.

First of all, business people are totally consumed by their business. It's not uncommon for a business owner to work crazy hours, seven days a week to keep the business growing or just ticking along. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but it comes at a cost. The owner's health suffers as do relationships, social life and family, along with any feelings of living a balanced, enjoyable life.

Secondly, business owners believe their business is the ticket to long-term financial freedom. A few years ago, I worked with a large franchised optometry brand. My role was to approach independent optometrists and invite them to join the franchise network. Most of the people I met turned me down because they had been in business for many years, had an established client base and believed that one day someone would come along and buy their business for a million dollars and that would fund their retirement years. What they failed to see was that the world has been and still is changing fast. Young practitioners wanting to get into the business no longer needed to buy an established practice. They could join a franchise group for substantially less money or open up right next door with better branding, better technology, better marketing, better systems and much greater buying power. This situation spells the end of the retirement plans for the old-school business owner. I'm sure you can think of many other sectors where a similar thing has happened.

Business owners and entrepreneurs by their very nature are risk takers so they usually haven't done much to protect themselves against risk. Most have the view that no matter what life throws at them, they'll find a way to cope. It's

“ What they failed to see was that the world has been and still is changing fast. ”

an admirable trait, but when things get really tough — they get sick and can't work, or worse, they tend not to have adequate protection in the form of life insurance, income protection insurance or TPD cover. There's nothing more heartbreaking than seeing someone who has worked hard all their life to build a business leave a spouse with a large amount of debt to service and a family to support on one income.

My current business Equi Wealth was formed as a result of all those years of observation and experience. Its purpose is to help make sure that people are well positioned financially and protected should things go wrong.

What is the best piece of business advice anyone has ever given you?

"Mate, no-one cares."

This sounds like a negative statement, but the message certainly wasn't. Many years ago, I was speaking with a friend who is a very successful entrepreneur during a time when things weren't going particularly well for me (ok, I was having a whinge!). I had fallen into the trap of looking for things or people to blame for my current circumstances — the banks, the market, my suppliers, my clients, even my family. I guess I was looking for sympathy. This friend's advice reminded me that everybody has their own issues to deal with and they are probably not particularly interested in mine. More importantly, it was up to me to step up, become better, take action and solve my own problems.

Ultimately, you have to take responsibility for your own circumstances because after all, where you are right now is the sum of the decisions you have made along the way. This advice reminds me there is no point looking for someone to blame. If I want to create a better outcome, I just have to keep making better decisions.

Describe to us the work you do and the value it provides to your clients.

Equi Wealth provides advice and ongoing assistance in three main areas — financial planning, finance and investing.

With the financial planning aspect, we work with you to develop your Wealth Creation MasterPlan. This is the blueprint for your financial success. We carefully analyse your current situation to understand all the opportunities and any inherent risks. Then we help you get clear on what your goals are for the next year, the next five years and all the way through to retirement. We then prioritise and begin to implement the plan to get you moving towards your ideal outcomes. This is not a one-off, set-and-forget process. Your circumstances will change, the market changes, and legislation changes. We review your status with you regularly and make any necessary tweaks or adjustments to make sure you stay on track.

What's one of the best strategies you've ever implemented for a client and why did it work so well?

There is honestly nothing more rewarding than finding ways to make a real difference to someone's financial position. Recently, I met with a young family with two children. Terry works for a big corporation making an above average salary and Tina runs her own business, which was covering its costs but by no means setting the world on fire. Then there was the debt: multiple credit cards, a business overdraft, personal loans and even a substantial loan from a family member. Cash flow was a constant struggle and the little things that matter, like holidays or even weekends away with the family, seemed to be getting further and further away. On the positive side, they had purchased a home and were managing to pay the mortgage each month, together they had almost \$200,000 in super and they also had a commercial property that Terry's dad had left them.

“ The super fund paid Terry the purchase price and therefore now owns the property. ”

The strategy we put in place took advantage of the fact that it's possible to transfer a commercial property from an individual to a self-managed super fund. We established a family super fund and effectively sold the property from Terry as the individual owner, to the super fund at the market value of the property. The super fund paid

Terry the purchase price and therefore now owns the property. The fund is getting the benefit of rental income in addition to the employer contributions that were already going in. With the proceeds of the sale, we were then able to eliminate almost all the personal debt, starting with the high interest credit cards. The net effect was that almost \$2,500 stopped disappearing for debt repayment each month. This meant no more checking the bank balance just to make sure there is available cash before filling up the car or doing the grocery shopping. In Tina's words, "Absolutely life changing!"

What do you think is the biggest mistake a business owner makes when it comes to building their wealth?

The biggest, most common trap for business owners is thinking that your business is the solution to everything. It's the classic 'all eggs in one basket' mistake. I understand the passion that drives people to grow their business and become completely absorbed in it. It's a key to success, but it's important to remember that your business may not keep on delivering the revenue and profit it does now for the next 10 or 20 years.

There have been many businesses, large and small, that have seen their market disappear because of things entirely outside their control. Does anybody remember getting your photos developed? How about using a book of maps to navigate your way around town? Are you still using a fax machine? There were enormous businesses built around

each of these things that are no longer relevant. It wasn't a case of these businesses not being run by good management teams or not being innovative. For nearly a century, no company commercialised the camera as successfully as Kodak. They introduced breakthrough technology to the market, including the Brownie camera in 1900, Kodachrome colour film, the handheld movie camera and the easy-load Instamatic camera.

Having a wealth creation strategy that is not fully dependent on your business and that doesn't require you to work 80 hours each week is simply smart planning. It's important that you take the time to give proper consideration to what you want your life to look like when you're out of the business. Look to create multiple streams of income and to use smart ways to leverage and multiply your results. These things don't seem urgent when you're on the hamster wheel of running and growing a business, but they are certainly important!

In your experience, what are the elements that make up a good financial plan?

A good financial plan should address the key elements of your financial future. If you think of a plan in terms of the questions it should answer, these would be the most common ones:

- How do I best manage my cash flow?
- What's my plan for reducing debt?
- How do I reduce my taxes?
- How can I protect my assets?
- Will I have enough money to retire on?
- How do I make sure I'm ok if life throws me a curveball?
- How can I make sure I'm covered financially if I have an accident or can't work?

- How much can I afford to invest?
- What should I invest in?
- When should I invest?
- What's my plan for when I'm no longer around?

There may be other questions depending on your individual circumstances, but these are a very good start. We develop a Wealth Creation Master Plan that addresses each of these questions and outlines alternate strategies for achieving the goals for each and every client.

A good plan should also be relatively simple and easily understood. It should include a thorough assessment of the potential benefits, risks and costs associated with the implementation of the plan and it should be easily managed because more than likely, you don't have mountains of free time to commit to looking after it.

A good plan should also have a built-in review cycle. All of the moving parts that make up your financial situation change constantly so it is important to carry out regular checks to make sure you're still on track.

As a business owner, what asset classes do you most recommend and why?

When it comes to recommendations, I should preface anything I say here with 'it depends'. As a wealth creation organisation, all advice we provide for our clients is very specific to their circumstances and tailored to their goals, desired outcomes and timelines.

In a general sense though, there are asset classes that I lean towards. We all have inherent biases as to what we think makes a good investment and what doesn't. We also have a personal risk profile that will influence our decisions. If you look at what you consider

to be a good investment, your view will probably be the result of a combination of factors, including what you've observed and been told, what you've experienced on your investing journey, what you've researched or read about and perhaps the professional advice you've received.

Now, some would say that coming from an Italian background automatically biases me toward property! Having grown up with an extended family that has been in real estate in Melbourne since the late fifties, I was always aware that property is one of the vehicles people use to build wealth. I still believe property — specifically residential property — should be the foundation of most investment portfolios. It has some big advantages; it's a very stable, predictable asset class, it generates income and can be a cash flow positive investment. Property can be leveraged and the banks and other lenders like it. Property is also consistently one of the best performing asset classes. In the ten years to 2018, it generated average returns in excess of 8.1 per cent. Australian shares over the same period returned 4.3 per cent.

That doesn't mean your first investment should be property. Buying a property is a big commitment and we've seen what changes in interest rates or major job losses GFC style can do to investors who are left high and dry. The best place to start is cash — save some so you can be in a position to invest. When you've put enough aside, you can start to invest in shares to improve the return on money that otherwise is just sitting in the bank. Shares also provide you with more flexibility and maintain liquidity.

If you need your money, shares can be turned back into cash quickly and relatively cheaply. Rather than chase individual shares, which most of our clients don't have the time or expertise to do, you can look at exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and managed funds.

“ The best place to start is cash — save some so you can be in a position to invest. ”

One of the things that has been getting much more attention in recent years — and rightly so in my view — is superannuation. Most people don't give their super too much thought. They believe it's locked away for years until retirement and they can't do anything with it until then. Nothing could be further from the truth. Making sure your current super fund generates decent returns and charges reasonable fees is a good place to start. Maybe, taking control of your super in a self-managed fund could work extremely well.

Your super is a really tax effective way of investing in any of the asset classes I've mentioned above. Income in your super fund is taxed at a flat rate of 15 per cent so, for many people, investing through their super can save them more than 20 per cent on their tax. Better still, when we convert our super into 'pension phase', we'll pay no tax at all on any investment income. Capital gains tax is also treated differently inside your super fund. This alone can mean you are tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars better off at retirement. Probably the closest thing we have to a tax haven — and it's perfectly legal!

In your opinion, what do business owners need to do to become financially free and how long does it take?

Becoming financially free is a journey, not an event. The fact that people's definition of financial freedom can vary so widely makes it almost impossible to put a specific timeline on it. However, I do have a theory.

I've been saying to people for quite some time now that it takes one decade to set yourself up for life. Before you start thinking that's too long, hear me out. The most important thing is to make a start, no matter how small; to begin the process of consciously creating wealth and developing good money management habits. If you start small, it may take a couple of years until you have enough to start investing in say, a small share portfolio. Let's say you keep saving

diligently and in four to five years, you have enough to invest in a very modest property. Let's then assume that property generates income and increases in value over the next three years. By year eight, you could be in a position to leverage that property and the money you have continued to save. You can look to purchase another investment property, more shares or a managed fund.

Note that I said one decade would set you up for life, not necessarily make you financially free. Over that ten year period, you have effectively established the habits and the foundation that will get you there. Of course, we all wish that this decade was the one between 20 and 30 years of age but that's not always the case. As the saying goes, 'The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second best time is now.' Get started!

Most business owners are very time poor and may not have the time to watch things like the stock market. How can a business owner grow their wealth without spending too much time?

"What is not started today is never finished tomorrow." — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Business owners are time poor, it's true. Mums are time poor. Executives are time poor — you get the idea. Everyone is time poor. As the quote above captures beautifully, if we never start, we will never achieve our goals. Our challenge is to prioritise well and use our time to take care of the most important things as well as the urgent ones.

There are many investments that don't require you to keep track daily or even weekly. Unless you're a very active trader, checking your stocks every day is probably a little like checking Facebook — partially a habit, partially interesting and predominantly a waste of time. Sure, you will have to put in some time at the beginning, doing your research and due diligence, selecting an advisor to work

“ The important thing is to catch yourself doing it and consciously change your thinking. ”

with and getting comparative quotes for insurances for example. However, as you get things in place, your time commitment should be minimal.

Using a wealth creation advisor will relieve you of a lot of headaches by taking care of compliance requirements and the payment of those annoying fees to ASIC and the ATO. They will also be able to fill out forms and prepare tax returns associated with managing your investment portfolio, freeing you to focus on other things.

You are now a big believer in making not only business changes but mindset changes. Why is this?

There has been plenty of work done on the power of your thoughts in relation to the outcomes in your life. *The Power of Positive Thinking*, *Think and Grow Rich*, *The Magic of Thinking BIG* and *Awaken the Giant Within* are a few of the classic books covering these topics. As a business owner, you've probably not spent much time examining how your thought patterns were formed, whether they are helping or hindering your journey to success and how you can better control your thoughts to help achieve your goals. For me, this is an ongoing challenge and one that I'm giving more and more credence and focus each day.

The first mindset trap is when you start to tell yourself that your current situation is outside your control. You start to wait for things that you can't control to change before your situation can get better — the economy, government policies, whatever it happens to be. We've all been guilty of this one, including me. The important thing is to catch yourself doing it and consciously change your thinking.

In addition to this, you've been taught to think in certain ways and your current thought programming started very early. If you think back to your childhood years, imagination was encouraged and rewarded. If you were standing on the couch in your superhero suit ready to take over the world, almost everyone around you would play along and build the dream, right?

As we get older, we're expected to become more mature and realistic. Instead of dreaming big, we're told that to get anywhere in life we have to knuckle down, study hard, get a good job and find a partner. From there, we're expected to buy a house in the suburbs, spend the next thirty years of our life paying it off and then retire happily ever after. This is what most of us have been taught when it comes to creating a 'good, comfortable' life. The truth is, this great Australian dream is well past its use-by date. If this is your plan, you are more than likely on track to join the 72 per cent or so of Australians who retire entirely dependent on the pension. The reality is, if you want more from life, you have to think differently.

How does a person go about stretching their minds and, to use your words, 'to think bigger'?

First of all, whatever it is you're thinking of doing, it is possible. Your job is to find a way to make it happen. We all love the stories of people who have overcome the odds to achieve incredible things. There's absolutely no reason you and I can't do the same. Almost every time, your biggest barrier is you.

I'm lucky to have friends who are very successful in their professions and businesses. A few years ago, I was having a social drink with a couple of them and we came up with a business idea. The conversation that followed was a real eye-opener for me. Nobody said, "We don't have the money," or "We don't have the time," or "That'll never work." Instead, the questions were, "Who do we know that can help?," "How can we raise the money?," and "Who can help us get us in front of

the decision makers?.” At the time I didn’t think too much of it but looking back, I realise that it was an insight into the mindset of successful people.

If you had your time over again, what are some of the things that you would do differently?

I think about this often. Not because I regret anything but because that’s the value of experience — being able to look back, take the lessons and apply them in the present. That’s how you make a really big difference to your own future and that of your clients.

The first thing I would do differently is start early. Wealth creation is a long journey and the earlier you start, the bigger the wins. Over the course of twenty or thirty years, we’re talking potentially millions of dollars better off.

Next, I would also have a plan. It’s so easy to float through your twenties not thinking too hard about anything (just like I did) and making questionable decisions. You get to your thirties and start loading yourself up with debt (think buying a home, having a family) and falling into the traps that stop the vast majority of Australians achieving their goals (an overload of bad debt, poor money management skills and an overactive spending gland).

Once you have a plan, you should focus on making it a reality. Not overnight; I’m not talking about get rich quick schemes. I’m talking about knowing and applying the fundamentals consistently over time.

Finally, I would get much more advice and help. It’s easy to think you know everything and can do everything by yourself when you’re twenty something, but very few people achieve financial freedom by themselves. There is plenty of advice and assistance available from

professional advisors and people out there who are already doing what you want to do.

What are some of your future plans or goals for the next five to ten years?

I've got some really exciting times ahead! One of the things I'm passionate about is working with twenty and thirty-somethings to get them on the path to financial freedom. Obviously, if we start early we can achieve so much more and at the same time, prove all the negativity we're bombarded with in the media every day wrong.

I don't think millenials have any more of a sense of entitlement than the previous generation, but they do have some massive advantages — technology, research capability, strong communities through social media, and platforms for collaborative learning and sharing of information. They also have a decade or more where their earning potential is good and their costs are relatively low.

To help, we're in the late stages of developing a financial transformation program. This will guide people through the most important changes and tweaks they can make to optimise their current situation, set themselves up for investing and growth, and begin the journey to financial security.

The other big issue is housing affordability. My children are in their twenties and I know this is on their minds. The big question is how to get a foot in the door. Getting into the property market for a first home or investment property is certainly not easy, but it is doable. My business will soon be launching a new managed fund that will enable people to invest the money they have saved toward their deposit in property that the managed fund owns. In addition, we will formulate a savings plan with each investor where they will invest an additional amount each month. Using this system, our investors

will get the benefit of rental returns, capital growth, tax advantages and the compounding effect of regular savings contributions. This means they will reach their goal of saving.

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MANAGE REACTION



JOANNA OAKEY

“ I think that’s why I struggled to engage in those early years of legal study because at heart I am far more of an entrepreneur than a lawyer. ”

Joanna Oakey

JOANNA OAKLEY

Joanna Oakley was born in Sydney, in 1978. A small town upbringing and the influences of her socially conscious parents helped Joanna form the foundations of a strong values base and a hard work ethic. It also fostered a penchant for doing things differently.

After achieving university awards and an honours degree in law, Joanna spent time working for some of Australia's top legal firms. She quickly built a loyal client base and became a known speaker in the area of contract law. Joanna has now spent more than a decade training some of Australia's biggest companies and governmental organisations to deal with and negotiate contracts.

Her love of business and skills in law finally culminated in the creation in 2009 of the commercial legal practice, Aspect Legal. Through this legal practice and her past experience, Joanna and the Aspect Legal team have worked with thousands of businesses and business owners, from small start-ups through to many leading multinational corporations. Aspect Legal proudly supports their clients' growth and helps them to thrive while protecting them from the unexpected storms of business.

Joanna also now hosts two of the top business law podcasts in Australia: *Talking Law* (providing smart legal tips for business), and *The Deal Room* (Australia's first mergers and acquisitions podcast).

Today, Joanna lives in Sydney's beautiful northern beaches with her husband and two young children. She spends her spare time dreaming about ways to create the perfect business, one that breaks the traditional lawyer mould, delivers deep value to its clients, and has a positive impact on the community and the world.

Why did you decide to become a lawyer?

I initially had ambitions to be a lawyer because I thought it would be intellectually stimulating and would keep me on my toes. That is very true of how my career has turned out, but it certainly wasn't true of many of the years of study involved with gaining the qualification.

The first few years of law at university were excruciatingly boring. There were hundreds of pages of reading each week surrounding what seemed to be very dry topics. It wasn't until legal subjects became extremely practical that I really engaged. As soon as I started working through cases involving real-life issues, I started to feel less like I had made a terrible mistake in choosing law.

As my degrees progressed, I threw myself into the developing subject of intellectual property and IT. This was a newly evolving area and gave me the chance to get at the forefront of developing concepts. I was hooked. I ended up achieving honours in my degree but the result was more of a reflection of the later years of connecting with the human stories involved, and of the developing area of IP, both of which I truly loved.

Did they ever teach you anything at law school about how to run a business?

There was no education about running a business at law school. I think that's why I struggled to engage in those early years of legal study because at heart I am far more of an entrepreneur than a lawyer. I've always loved business and understanding people. Law took a little more time.

When I was starting out in my legal studies, I was also studying psychology and communications. Neither of these subjects taught me how to run a business, but they both taught me extremely valuable lessons about people and communicating. I loved behavioural

“ Legal issues are often also about understanding and managing reactions and behaviours. ”

psychology and I still feel it was one of the best degrees I could have done. It gave me an important foundational understanding of human behaviour. At the end of the day, business is really just about people. Legal issues are often also about understanding and managing reactions and behaviours. In fact, sometimes I feel like my studies

in psychology were far more useful for my career than my legal studies were.

Lawyers seem to be the butt of many jokes. People love to make fun of the profession and often this is for good reason. I have met so many lawyers who are completely removed from commercial reality and many lawyers who appear to lack normal personality. This makes sense when I look back at the kind of study you have to go through to be a lawyer. As I have said, I initially struggled to connect with it, which can be a filter. Students who were creative and business-minded started falling by the wayside early on in their studies.

My friends at university were a bit like me. We were a bit anti-establishment and the opposite of the old-school boys club. Even though most of them finished their legal degree, they still mostly ended up in careers outside of law. I think that's a real shame because being a really good lawyer requires a personality. It requires understanding people. It requires engaging with and understanding your clients and your counter-parties.

After working for other law firms, why did you choose to start your own?

When I first started working in legal firms, I was absolutely stunned by how unhappy the lawyers I met were. It was absolutely bizarre. These people had studied for years and years, and were really intelligent,

high performing people but so many of them hated what they were doing every day. I knew I never wanted to be trapped by golden handcuffs. I always had a very strong sense that I needed to work out how I could do it differently.

I believe happy people create the best results. My desire to create my own practice was shaped by my values and my approach to life. Added to this was my entrepreneurial side. I have always loved business so I quickly figured out that the only way law was going to work for me was if I had a practice of my own. My vision was to build a legal practice that represented how I saw the world and which made me proud to be in the profession.

So off I went and started my own legal practice. I had a loyal band of clients who had followed me in and out of legal practices (many of these clients have followed me around between practices for almost two decades). With a solid base to start with, I set about creating a legal firm that would allow me to blend my love of business with my skills and experience in law.

What do you think are the essential qualities or attributes of a great business owner?

The greatest business owners are the ones who are passionate about what they are doing and how they are doing it. They have also figured out how to make it through the hard times with good humour.

Business can be really tough and there are inevitable highs and lows. Many very successful business owners I deal with will have had at least one or two brushes with total wipeout. Business conditions change, key staff leave from time to time, legal and business risks can be lurking around the corner where you least expect it. It's really important for business owners to understand when they are confronted with a difficult situation that they are not the only ones and they are not alone!

I believe the keys to surviving the tough times and making it through the other end are a positive attitude and a strong support team around you. You must have the ability to be flexible and the ability to learn from the past. It also helps if you have a strong purpose.

The person I picture most when I think about the essential qualities or attributes of a great business owner is a client I worked with many years ago in the sale of his IT consulting business. His family emigrated to Australia with absolutely nothing when he was a child. He grew up with very little but knew how to work hard. He was the first of his family to go into a job as a white-collar worker and after building a business from the ground up, which eventually had hundreds of staff, he sold to a large listed corporation for millions.

Before this man got to that point, he endured the nineties recession and the aftermath of the Y2K tech dive. In both instances, he could see that the business might not survive the long-lasting economic declines. However, he was able to continue to thrive and to reach the point of having multiple buyers compete for his business.

The funny thing is that when I met him (when he was poised, ready to sell his business) I was unsure whether or not he would actually go through with it. He seemed to love his business so much I wasn't sure he would ever actually sell. He loved going in each day and providing value that he felt no-one else in the industry was providing.

I was speaking to this client recently about his business, and eventual sale. The things that came through so incredibly clearly were his passion for delivering value to his clients and his passion for his staff. This approach was one of the greatest formulas to his success — it built an incredibly loyal client base and fostered an enviable staff culture around him.

He is the kind of business owner that I seek to emulate. His success and pure love of what he did every day provide an incredibly important lesson for all business owners.

You have now worked with hundreds of businesses. What are the biggest mistakes you see business owners making?

The two biggest mistakes I see businesses make are not having the right systems set up in the business to minimise risk and letting problems drag on for too long.

An example of this that I see regularly play out (particularly with growing businesses) is the failure to manage late or non-paying clients quickly enough. This can be a significant issue and one I have witnessed be a direct cause of business insolvency. Getting this area right is critical, particularly in growth phase, which is often for many businesses a cash tight period. To prevent a backlog of unpaid accounts, it is important to set up your client relationships correctly from the start. You must have the right internal systems and procedures to deal quickly with any issues before they become large problems. You also need to take adequate steps to protect the assets in a business and the assets of the owners and directors.

Another real killer in a business is disputes between owners. When the leadership is off course because of a focus on internal issues, other business problems start to appear and take over.

There are so many issues which can cause massive cost and disruption to a business. Contract disputes can be extremely expensive, particularly if it turns out the contract is not in your favour. A lack of IP protection can also cripple a business.

But, all of these issues can be summarized as those two biggest killers of failing to lay the right preventative foundations and ignoring problems when they arise. No matter how diligent you are in your business, legal issues will arise

“ Contract disputes can be extremely expensive, particularly if it turns out the contract is not in your favour. ”

from time to time. The most problematic cases come from failing to address these issues as they appear.

Why is it important for businesses to have strong legal representation?

I've spent decades watching how businesses grow and seen the things that can make all the difference between a more straightforward trajectory and growing pains. Most business owners are busy and time poor. Often there's so much going on and so little time to do it that legal discussions come last.

What's more, law is not a sexy topic. It's not the sort of thing business owners and managers spend a lot of time reading about. It's far more interesting to read books and articles that focus on topics relating to marketing, scaling and leveraging a business.

However, if a business's risk management strategies aren't developed at the same rate of its growth, you are potentially creating issues that can have massive ramifications down the line.

Developing a legal strategy is akin to building the foundations of a business. If you build the business too quickly and don't put the right support in place, it's easy for cracks to start to develop. When those cracks start to show, they can significantly undermine and impact the growth and success of the business.

So where do you think business owners should start in terms of protecting themselves?

Business structure is usually the first place to start when looking at the legal underpinning of a business. The issue of 'structure' relates to lots of different considerations, and requires that the owners of a business understand what business structure the business is operating out of, how that structure will work in terms of the future plans of

the organisation, whether the business itself should have multiple entities (for example asset holding entities, and trading entities), and the protections in place for the personal assets of the directors and other relevant stakeholders.

It also entails taking a serious look at the agreements between the owners of the business, and to consider whether these will be adequate to ward off issues, or at least help to minimise any disruption that may be caused if the equity holders have differing approaches to decision making, exit, or other thorny issues.

Having the wrong business structure in place can cause a business to leak money where it's not necessary, and can at worst mean that valuable assets are unnecessarily exposed to risk. On the flip side, getting a businesses' structure and structure documentation right can mean big financial gains, and easier business exit.

This is a really poorly understood area — people often don't understand the options available to them, and the consequences of the type of approaches they have chosen.

What about business partnerships? Do you like them and what is the best way to structure them?

I have businesses that I own solely myself and businesses where I have partners. Both work brilliantly in their own situations. Of course, I have seen hundreds of clients with issues play out from taking one or the other approach. My opinion on partnerships is very balanced. I like them, in the right context, if they are set up properly.

The benefit of going into business with partners is that it can create great leverage. You can have access to other people who are as invested as you are in the business, which can be a very helpful thing in keeping motivation high. In many instances, having partners bringing in different skill sets can multiply the performance of a business.

“ It is much better to spell details out in advance before the relationship sours. ”

However, if you aren't careful with who you partner with problems can easily occur. Things usually start out rosy, but in a very high proportion of cases they end with differences of opinion or objectives.

I've seen internal disputes between partners drag on for years and watched businesses be brought to their knees because the owners are too absorbed with their internal fights.

This is why it is extremely important to start every business relationship with clear guidelines that deal with the tough questions. It is much better to spell details out in advance before the relationship sours. Agreeing on these issues from the beginning often prevents trouble from occurring in the first place.

When it comes to our clients, what are the risks we need to manage?

Client relationships are one of the most important relationships for a business; however, they can also create a large source of risk for organisations if the right foundations for this relationship aren't properly established from the outset.

Often, the first area where legal issues arise in dealing with clients is slow payment or non-payment. The reality is that unless a business is getting all payments upfront it will likely hit a point at some stage in its growth cycle where slow payment (and non payment) will become an issue, and contribute to the cash crunch that is a reality that hits the majority of fast growing businesses at some point. So one of the important things to consider is how to set up the legal foundations of the business from the point of view of avoiding or reducing non-payment and slow payment.

The other main area of issue with clients are disputes about whether the goods or services have been provided in accordance with the expectations of the client. These types of disputes can cost a lot of time and money, and fracture important client relationships. But having a tight approach to setting up your client relationships and contracts can go a long way to minimising these types of issues from occurring, and reducing the time and complexity of dealing with issues that do arise.

A lesser occurring risk, but one of perhaps the most significant risk value, is the consideration of potential liability or responsibility for issues that may occur along the way in the client relationship. Client agreements need to be carefully structured around this issue. We have seen many contracts over the years where the risk taken on by an organisation with its clients far outweighs the value of the goods/services they are providing. This is particularly apparent when organisations are required to adopt terms and conditions proposed by large clients (and particularly when they do so without properly understanding what they are committing to).

How important is a business service agreement and what should go in it?

A proper client agreement is absolutely imperative for all businesses to have. A business must have a proper, tailored, appropriate agreement with all clients and suppliers.

It's useful to first start out by mentioning the many different names these documents have. They can be called service agreements, supply agreements, terms and conditions of business, trading terms, sale terms, purchase order terms, and many other names.

It really doesn't matter what they are called, they are effectively all the same thing — a document that sets out how the goods or services will be provided, payment information, delivery timeframes, and the

general obligations of each of the parties. This document may also deal with who owns the intellectual property (where IP is relevant) and will usually deal with risk allocation, i.e. allocating who will be responsible for the risk under the contract.

It is extremely important to tailor your client agreements so as to maximise your legal protection. I have seen countless issues caused by businesses using client agreements that don't properly reflect their business and their business risks. Your agreements must be appropriate and must be simple enough for your clients to be able to read and understand.

The other important thing with client agreements is that you and your team understand what is in these agreements. The agreement should be updated regularly as your business environment and approaches change.

In respect to staff, what do we need to be aware of?

Without staff a business can't scale, so staff are imperative to the growth and success of most businesses. But they also create one of the greatest areas of ongoing operational risk in a business and sometimes dealing with staffing issues can feel like a battleground.

Almost every business that I've had connection with has at some stage had legal issues in the area of staffing. So it is not really a case of if, it's really a case of when.

The nuances of the legal environment relating to dealing with employees and contractors are highly complicated. But there are lots of simple steps a business can take to protect itself – for example, things like avoiding unfair dismissal claims, or protecting a business against employees taking clients or IP with them are all a matter of just having the right understanding, and then putting the right systems in place. Businesses also need to ensure they fully understand how to

correctly hire and fire, how to manage staff, and the documentation that is required.

How about the area of marketing? What are the legal risks there?

Yes, it's really important that you're aware of legislation that relates to the area of marketing.

Firstly, before you begin marketing your business, make sure you understand spam laws and that you have the required permission before sending out marketing emails. Make sure you understand privacy laws and that you have the consents, policies and collection statements in place that are relevant for your business.

Next, read up on the laws relating to misleading and deceptive conduct to ensure that you (or your staff) aren't doing things that might be seen as misleading or deceptive. Also, be careful about promotions that you are running, and that you have complied with trade promotion requirements.

Then we come to the sticky new area of social media. You should be thinking about what risk sits in your business relating to social media marketing, and putting in place systems, procedures and company policies that regulate how your social media channels are used, and monitored (bearing in mind that your business can be liable for things other people post on your social media channels, as well as for things that are posted by your business). Make sure you understand the area of defamation (particularly if you or others post anything about individuals or small businesses).

And finally, ensure that you have staff policies in place to restrict the way that your staff deal with social media connections and indeed how they can continue to engage (or not engage as the case may be!) with connections after they're no longer employed with your

business. So, for example, you might want to ensure that they don't stay connected to clients of the business after you have parted ways, even through social media.

Let's talk about Intellectual Property. What is it exactly?

Intellectual Property (IP) is such a broad topic, it deserves a book all on its own! This area is immense. I can't tell you the number of times we have had clients suddenly facing issues because they just haven't understood how to protect their IP. This area of law can provide so much value when done well and so much risk when done poorly.

In summary, intellectual property refers to creations of the mind. Things that are intangible. It can be very clear if real property has been stolen (if you own a chair, you can tell if it has been stolen because it will no longer be where you left it). It can be much harder to detect IP infringement and to prove your ownership in order to enforce the rights you have over the property.

What are different forms of IP and can you give us some practical examples where they can be used?

The types of intellectual property in most businesses that are likely to be of value (and, therefore, something that you need to consider and protect) are:

- *Trademarks* — The names or logos you use to distinguish your goods or services from those of your competitors. This might be a business brand name, a product or service brand name or a logo. It can also be letters, numbers, even colours, scents and aspects of branding and packaging. You can have unregistered trademarks, but generally speaking, the best way to protect your trademark against competitors using something similar, or from someone trying to stop your business from using it is by getting a trademark registration in each of the countries that you use it. This

can be one of the easiest and most useful types of IP protection in a business, if you do it the right way.

- *Copyright* — Copyright is an automatic protection in Australia for bodies of work, drawings, art, literature, music, film, broadcasts and computer programs. Many businesses don't understand the value of copyrighted works in their organisation. They aren't aware of the simple steps they can take to reduce the likelihood of infringement and they don't understand what they need to do to ensure their business holds the underlying rights to copyrighted works created for them.
- *Patents* — Patents are less relevant to the majority of businesses, but if your business creates inventions or new processes, this is an important area for you to understand.
- *Trade secrets* — This refers to confidential information in a business such as secret formulas, processes and methods used in production. Often, there are things in a business that may not be protectable by other intellectual property rights above but that might be highly important and confidential to the business. It is important these are protected by a business by limiting who has access and through contracts, confidentiality agreements, and appropriate clauses in agreements with people who might have access to the information.

There are a few other areas of IP rights but the ones above are usually the most relevant to businesses that we deal with.

Why do you believe it is so important for businesses these days to make IP protection such a strong priority?

Over the past two decades, I have seen countless examples of businesses who have cost themselves massive amounts of money due to their inability to understand the value of their IP and failure to take the proper steps to protect it. Protection of IP can often be fairly straightforward, and inexpensive. It is absolutely one example

of an area where prevention is almost always significantly cheaper than the cure.

It is also an area where so much of the value of a business can sit. Many businesses don't realise this until either an issue occurs which threatens their ownership of their IP, or someone else infringes it (whittling down the value to the business). Another often occurring issue is businesses not realising the value of IP until they get to the point of sale, then finding out that they haven't set the business up properly in terms of establishing and protecting the ownership of their IP.

Sophisticated buyers understand the value of IP and proper recognition. Having the right protection in place can play a large role in helping a business achieve the highest value in a sale.

Understanding this area of IP is absolutely critical for business owners in order for them to protect the value of their business and to set themselves up to properly capitalise that value.

What are the consequences of neglecting IP and are there any notable stories that come to mind?

Neglecting IP can lead to a lot of expensive outcomes for businesses. The types of issues we see play out regularly resulting from a poor IP approach are:

- Loss of client databases.
- Inability to stop other people using your businesses' IP – this can be caused by a businesses' failure to understand its IP and by its failure to protect it.
- Not owning the underlying rights to the IP or not being able to prove your business owns it.

- Not having sufficient protections built into your agreements with suppliers, customers, staff, partners, distributors and manufacturers.

Examples can be useful and I have no shortage of them!

I have recently seen one business have to write off more than \$60,000 it had spent on marketing costs for the development of a new brand. Unfortunately, the marketing company hadn't thought of trademark searching as part of the concept development process.

When we were approached to help in the last few days before the new brand went live, we had the unenviable task of breaking the news that not only could this new brand not ever be protected by our clients but that if they used it, they would be at risk of an infringement action on their hands by other organisations (some of them very sizeable) who had trademarks that were similar.

The marketing company had a small understanding of trademarks and, in a classic example of where a little knowledge can be dangerous, organised their own trademark searching along the way. Unfortunately, trademark searching can be quite tricky. Whoever was searching missed a couple of hard to find but very important marks — resulting in choosing a brand that would have delivered a massive amount of risk. Whilst this was a terrible waste of the months of concept development and marketing fees, at least we were able to catch the issue before they went live and faced major consequences.

The above company fared much better than another client we recently dealt with who was forced to change their entire company brand after more than a decade of use because they had simply not thought of trademark registration earlier. The sad part of this story was that if they had come to us just six months earlier than they did, we could have saved the brand for them. Timing can be absolutely critical with trademarks and this case was the perfect example of the difference a few months can make.

One of the worst stories I have seen in this area came from a business that had been around for 50 years with a brilliant and catchy name, who lost monopoly rights to the use of the name simply because they had no understanding of the importance of a trademark registration! The kicker was that when buyers of the business found out about the issue, the sale fell through, leaving the business owner with an unsaleable business. Not the kind of news you want to hear about a business you have devoted five decades of your life to!

We also have lots of tales of IP woes outside of the area of trademarks.

The most regular IP issue we see outside of trademarks is the loss of important information by companies through a lack of proper contractual protections. We so often see ex-staff heading off to competitors or setting up their own businesses and poaching clients and other staff members. This can be extremely difficult to prevent if the business doesn't have the right clauses in their agreements with their staff.

We also have seen many instances of issues caused at the time of business sale, when it becomes apparent that the business can't prove its underlying ownership of the IP. Oftentimes, IP is one of the biggest components of value in a business so this can be a massive issue when it comes to the time of sale.

What are some common myths you see in relation to IP?

One of the greatest myths we see businesses suffer from is the belief that if they are able to register a business name, there is no risk in using this name for a business or product.

This is a complete fallacy and can result in marketing companies, accountants, and businesses themselves choosing and registering business names and then later on down the track finding out they

have a name that is not protectable or that infringes someone else's IP rights.

The reality is you need to be very careful when you are starting out with a new brand, to ensure you are not infringing other people's trademarks.

We are approached regularly by businesses that want to get trademark protection for a new brand that either they have developed, or had a creative team develop for them. We have had the unfortunate task of having to inform them that the brand they have chosen is either completely unprotectable (i.e. they wouldn't be able to stop competitors from using similar versions), or worse, creates a large risk that they themselves are infringing someone else's brand.

The other top myth we see all the time is the belief that if you pay someone to create IP for you, you will own the underlying IP rights. The reality is if you have someone create IP for you who is not an employee, you must have an agreement with them that assigns you the IP. Otherwise they will most likely retain the underlying rights to what they have created and they might be able to go and use it with one of your competitors. They might also be able to prevent you from using it in certain ways. This can impact your business, not just in terms of what you can do with your IP but also the value of that IP. I've seen many examples of massive losses caused by this approach.

How do you protect your business IP?

There are a number of very simple things businesses can do to start to protect their IP:

- *Evaluate the IP in your business* — Understand what is there and what value it has. This is the first step in working out the best approach to protection and enforcement.

- *Get brands registered as trademarks* — This is such a simple and inexpensive process, if done correctly and if done early enough. However, there are many traps for unwary players. I have worked in IP for decades and still see new issues and approaches from time to time.
- *Review contracts* — Go over legal agreements with anyone who is creating (or has created) IP for the business. Ensure IP ownership is clear, assignment is dealt with, responsibility for IP protection and infringement is set out, and moral rights have been waived (if relevant).
- *Review agreements* — Go over your agreements with suppliers, customers and key personnel to ensure IP is properly dealt with.
- *Develop an IP register* — This gives you a simple process for recording the development of copyrighted works and other IP, in case you need to prove your ownership in the future.
- *Seek advice* — This will ensure you understand what IP exists and is being created. It will also provide the reassurance that you are properly protecting the value of your IP.

What do you love most about being in a career that helps business owners achieve greater levels of success?

I feel privileged to be a lawyer who can help right many wrongs and support truly inspirational, hard-working business owners.

Initially, in my career and studies, I struggled to see the point of lawyers. Commercial law seemed to be a game. A lot of this disillusion came from working on matters or with people who didn't connect with my values. At many times, I felt what I was doing every day wasn't making a particularly positive impact on the world.

I now understand how important good quality, value-based legal advice can be. I have been around long enough now to know the

dire consequences for people of not understanding the law. I have witnessed some awful horror stories and I love that my company can minimise the risk for businesses of repeating mistakes I have seen others make in the past.

One comment I've heard time and time again from business owners is that they are scared of unknown risks. They fear what they don't know and they aren't sure how to properly protect themselves. I feel privileged to be able to help our clients understand these risks and prevent them.

Free BONUS GIFT

Joanna Oakey has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$300.00 to all readers of this book.

Legal Risk Review Checklist — Joanna Oakey and the team at Aspect Legal have helped thousands of businesses establish adequate legal protection. With this risk review checklist, you can find out whether there are any legal landmines lurking in your business. After completing a brief online checklist, you can get in touch for a free legal consultation to discuss your needs.

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PRODUCTIVE STATE



FABRICE BEILLARD

“ Stress can be ok for short bursts but a chronic, increasing level of stress is usually a message you need to take a breath and get smarter about how you do things. ”

Fabrice Beillard

FABRICE BEILLARD

Fabrice Beillard was born in Morocco to French parents, in 1974. From an early age, he travelled the world and enjoyed an outdoorsy, busy and social lifestyle, playing soccer on the beach rather than staying inside watching television.

Fabrice graduated from high school early and went on to study business in France and America, attending various leading institutions. He began his career doing business unit management and turning around large corporates and has since owned, invested in, partially owned and started many businesses, from nightclubs in Hong Kong to personal development companies in Australia. Most importantly, he has helped business owners to achieve success through Australia Business Coaching, the Australia-based international coaching and consulting firm he founded in 2011.

A globally acclaimed business systems and profit growth strategist, Fabrice has helped business owners all over the planet add millions of dollars to their revenue and achieve a better lifestyle in the process. He has been referred to as a leading 'Freedom Generator', helping countless individuals to not only start, grow and optimise their operations but to exit their business and achieve what he refers to as holistic success. With Fabrice's guidance, an impressive proportion of his firm's clients have received multiple national business awards.

Fabrice and his businesses have been featured in a range of leading media outlets. Collaborating with major global organisations, he has shared his knowledge with some of the world's best business experts and thought leaders for major and global organisations, governments and institutions, such as Harvard. He is also an international best-selling author.

Thanks to his strong sense of social responsibility, Fabrice and his companies generously sponsor underprivileged businesses in over 60 countries via the platform Kiva.

What was your very first significant job and what did it teach you?

In the country where I come from, we had to do military service. That was definitely not an option for me as I preferred to give orders than to receive them (amongst many other reasons — like not wanting to participate in war). The only way out of it was to work for company subsidiaries overseas. At 23, I was all set to be a Financial Controller in Brazil for a large factory. It was a huge responsibility at that age, but somehow I thought I would figure it out.

Because of visa quotas, they had to hire a local resource instead. At the last minute, I was offered a sales role in Australia for another subsidiary. My responsibilities would also include sales territories, such as Fiji. This sounded good to me! As a keen surfer, I thought that would be fine for a year or two.

When I arrived in Australia, I had to do direct sales in industrial zones by door knocking and cold calling. I had to sell an unknown brand of fax-machines, which were already on the decline.

I had expected to be running the strategy of the company within six months, smashing big goals and touring the waves of my sales territory on weekends. Having grown up in elite circles, with some friends being ultra-wealthy, I was in a total state of shock and confusion. I realised that maybe I would not be a billionaire and full-time surfer by 25, as I had believed until then. This is probably why I have this lovely shiny feature on the top of my head — I had significant hair loss when I realised that maybe I was normal and had to work. Despite my frustration, the alternative was to join the army and serve additional penalty time. I decided to stay in Australia.

As a shy guy who was struggling to understand what people were saying to me in a foreign language, I kept staring at the phone. It kept looking back at me and not much else was happening. Luckily, the pressure was on and I had to make it happen. I soon managed to convince

“ Some billion dollar companies make things happen with the bare essentials. ”

the senior managers that we needed door knockers and telemarketers. As the pain of the army was bigger than the pain of selling and getting out of my comfort zone, I quickly managed to be one of the few survivors in this tough environment.

We had sales meetings almost every day and one department only had one computer that was giving email access. At the time, working our way through the Yellow Pages was one of our main ways to develop business and most employees had no internet unless there was a reason for it. The sales manager would be waiting for me on the company stairs at night after my appointments to see how many sales had been closed. I was doing my numbers and then some so it was actually not bad for me. I got asked to stay to turn around some issues within the unit and eventually, I took over the role of my boss.

This was actually a great first lesson — there is no need for fancy stuff and big brand budgets. If you are willing to hustle, there are many ways to success. Some billion dollar companies make things happen with the bare essentials. Actually, I was helping a fairly large company once that is to this day running their annual meeting with the CEO and all 200 managers arriving with a piece of paper and nothing else.

After my initial success with this employer, I was asked to turn around other divisions. I was able to secure major global deals and when I left the subsidiary was getting very close to nine figures — a large proportion of which came from accounts that I landed or managed. I was usually the only guy under 30 in the boardroom and overall had a great experience and felt successful.

What I learnt from this period in my life is:

- *Don't make unnecessary sacrifices* — If you have a work ethic and know you can get results, do it for causes you love or people who care (about you) and think of your own well-being first. If you are working for big corporates, although times have changed a bit you are usually just a number. If so, be smart about not overworking yourself for no reward or reason.
- *Sales is the first skill you need* — You are always selling or persuading others in life, especially when you get to levels where you can have impact. You can either enrol people in your vision and dreams or you can make someone else's happen.
- *Be the producer/provider* — If you can make numbers happen, you can always rely on yourself and be free. You can also be the person others will want to be around as they know you can help them get their share.
- *Do what makes you feel uncomfortable* — Had I not been forced to learn to sell and get over my unrealistic expectations, I probably would never be where I am now.

The final lesson is that you can achieve anything you want if you follow the right strategies and have consistency and persistence.

Describe the work you do and the value it provides to your clients.

I founded Australia Business Coaching in 2011.

After interacting with thousands of business owners all over the world, we found that businesses need different things at different times in their journey. Our goal is to help business owners achieve their vision, improving their financial results and lifestyle in the process.

We provide the education, inspiration, support, strategy and resources business owners need to go through the steps that we already understand. This empowers them to fast-track their journey

to success. The business owners who are attracted to us are usually doing well and want to be even more successful. Our motto says it all: 'More Time, More Profits.'

If you are a business that is already getting consistent revenue flow and has decent marketing foundations, we help you get to the next level faster. The result is higher returns and a better lifestyle.

Here are some of the common business challenges we encounter and their 'symptoms' at this level:

1. Lack of structure including systems and processes. The symptoms of this are constant 'urgent' tasks, high staff turnover, too many staff and constant 'busyness'.
2. Team and leadership issues, with the symptoms being 'we cannot keep good people', and 'I have to do it myself'.
3. Profit problems — where revenue increases but profits are not proportionally bigger.
4. Lack of focus on important things and poor strategy, with the obvious symptom being no progress in wealth.

Businesses which have these challenges are not necessarily in 'trouble' but are looking to go from six or seven to eight or nine figures. They need to leverage, scale and optimise so they get higher profits and smoother operations, and we help them to supercharge their sales and marketing process for faster expansion. We provide the tools and knowledge to fill the gaps business owners may not even be aware of.

This is not our core market, but we also help businesses that are just starting or still struggling.

This type of businesses experience weak marketing resulting in a lack of clients and cash. They also have poor plans and foundations — business owners in this category are 'busy but broke' which means they are usually frustrated and confused.

Those customers are budget sensitive but also need fast results so we work with them in a very affordable and time efficient way, usually from the comfort of their office/home through digital and group programs. Once those elements are in place, they have consistent, reliable revenue and the confidence to go through the next phase.

The key value is not just the additional time and money that our clients manage to secure, it is what it does for them, their family, their communities and environment with a ripple effect.

I am passionate about what I call Holistic Success which is a new program we are launching. What is fun is to help owners have a thriving business as a base to grow from so they can be the best version of themselves and have exceptional lives. It is all the things you can do when your business supports you (as opposed to the other way around) whether it may be time with family, holidays, charity, work on other things you are passionate about, or just have fun! I personally love to travel and have been going around the world several times a year and been able to pursue hobbies and things I never could have if I would not have been the master of my own time and I wish this for everyone, so we have a better world where people can live a life of their own design and achieve their goals and dreams so they can focus on their talents and passion. I am very far still from where I want to be and I have fears, doubts and failures and all the things you might also experience at times, but I am responsible for my results and I have the ability to control more of my life than the average person. If we could all have more time and take care of our material needs, the world would be a better place and having a successful business is the first way to do so if you do it right. You can then have more positive impact, and you don't have to focus on small, petty things any more.

“ We provide the tools and knowledge to fill the gaps business owners may not even be aware of. ”

What are the most important things you have learnt about how to grow a business?

I regularly interview clients, peer experts and friends who have very successful businesses, including some that sold in the billion-dollar mark. I relentlessly fine-tune what I learn for the benefit of my clients so they can hear the same messages. However, there are a couple of elements that always seem to come back.

Firstly, to grow a business, you have to be hungry and take action. That starts with your vision, being passionate and having willpower. If you lack these, it might prove too difficult as there will always be challenges. If you do not have the fire, you will quit or plateau.

Secondly, you need to be coachable and be a great learner. You can either do costly and taxing trial and error or you can take what works to constantly improve what you do and grow. If you can do that, you will be able to pick the business-growing elements you need as you go along, adjusting them effectively and taking shortcuts.

There are no one-size-fits-all secrets, just good strategies that need to be executed, monitored and improved as you scale up. If you are adaptable and open, you will be able to learn and figure out what is important to you and your business.

Finally, in terms of skill, I would say selling, marketing, communicating effectively and negotiating are all important for business growth. If you do that well, you will have the cash to pay people who are good at what you struggle at so you can build a strong company.

From your perspective, what do you think holds business owners back from achieving their real potential?

Here's my take on this. The business and the owner, until the business has taken on a life of its own (which usually takes time), are actually

closely related. Even some very large operations actually perish or take a completely different shape when the visionary or driver exits.

Your business and your life will give you what you are prepared to accept and your results will only be as good as your standards. You decide, then you do the things others are not prepared to do so you can have what they don't. You raise your habits and self-image to the standards you need to be in order to become that person you want to be. It is very simple and basic, but it requires consistent effort and it involves many moving parts.

The problem with most business owners is that they either don't have a coach or someone to tell them when they aren't meeting their own standards. In some cases, they never set them correctly in the first place. This limits them from achieving their true potential.

What have been some of your biggest success stories?

When I started my first business, I thought I would see if the successes I created for other businesses could also work for myself so I applied my methods to different goals. With a small marketing budget, I managed to create a six figure passive income in less than 11 months.

However, I am sorry to say that I lost everything! The reason this is a success story is that I learnt some good lessons from it. I wanted to grow too fast, I got greedy and I paid the price. Most of the time, the quick money goes faster than it comes. The things that require effort and are sustainable long term are more likely to create more wealth.

The lesson I learned was that when something or someone feels wrong, check if it is just fear getting in your way or it is your inner wisdom. When I made the mistakes in this instance, I knew it was the latter. I went for it anyway and I paid the price. This was because I picked a model and people that looked great on paper but did not have

the required elements and values to make it work long term. I turned a blind eye to my feelings to my detriment and to the detriment of some friends who had invested with me. It was all so stressful that I got sick for a while.

The second success from this story is that starting back from nothing except credit card debt and a \$100 marketing budget, I managed to quickly create a life where I could travel whenever I wanted, do what I wanted with my time (even if I chose to work way too much anyway), never lack for anything and earn more than I did in the corporate world. Carving my way back was not easy and there were dark moments. When my friends were hosting barbecues, I was going to seminars. When my friends were going for dinners, I was watching business videos.

I am proud that I made the effort to get back on top and that alone is a success. I have had many other successes, but I tend to remember the ones where efforts were involved and where I conquered.

In terms of my business, I feel successful because we help clients hit major goals. There have been some with very impressive numbers, but what really matters is when people tell us we have changed their life. A recent example is a business owner Mum who was never seeing her kids and had a business in which she was working very hard but never making enough profits. In less than six weeks, she had three additional support staff, had freed up 40 per cent of her time and increased both revenues and profits. I'm proud of this because her success also positively impacts others.

In your opinion, what are the differences between Australia and the rest of the world when it comes to business?

On the surface, not much. In the details, a lot!

I will start with the ones I don't personally like. First, in Australia, there is too much reliance on industries that just take from the planet. This should not be the case when there is so much potential to develop sustainable activities and create value instead of just taking. Secondly, when you divide the GDP by the very small number of inhabitants, overall people can relax as there is wealth and it is not as badly distributed as some other areas of the world.

I know I will make a few people upset here, and it does not apply to everyone/everywhere, but in Australia, the desire and pace of action are less than what I have witnessed in other countries. It can be hard to find qualified, motivated people for a price that a small business can afford, which is part of the reasons why outsourcing is growing. However, I think this is also a good thing as it is not all about profits and there is balance. I obviously much prefer to live here than anywhere else for the time being and I am so grateful to be in a place that is clean and civilized. In Australia, nature has not been destroyed yet and people have a fair level of freedom.

Now, the good stuff! First, I feel as though everyone is given a real chance in Australia. Secondly, even though costs are very high for SMEs in comparison to some other countries, small business and entrepreneurship are valued and supported.

Australians have better work-life balance and are more interested in results than hours at the desk. There are some genuine players who have good values and want to do good. Generally, this makes for a great environment in which to operate a business.

Aussies take action and don't mind a good fight — I love this! Maybe I am biased as I might be exposed to the best and most honest people, but I believe we live in an amazing country. The last thing is Aussies tend to think on a global scale. Because the market is smaller and anywhere you want to go is eight hours away by plane (except New Zealand), boundaries shrink.

What are two factors that help business owners recognise whether they need to make changes?

In regards to the big picture and how your business goes, there are obviously a bunch of metrics that make sense to track regularly. If you look at the very big picture and how your business relates to you as the owner (if you are still involved in any shape or form), there are two very simple things.

One is your levels of stress, the other is your income.

Your level of stress indicates whether you are doing the things you are meant to do, doing what you are not designed for or doing more than you can handle with your current resources. Stress can be ok for short bursts but a chronic, increasing level of stress is usually a message you need to take a breath and get smarter about how you do things.

Your income indicates if are making your efforts count and whether your business is adding value to your financial security or freedom. It also shows whether you are not demanding your true worth or adding the value that people expect and are willing to pay for.

Those are two easy, simple indicators of where you are at in your business journey that no one really thinks to check. I strongly suggest to self-assess those two criteria regularly. As time goes by, you want to be aware and not only taking count after years have passed, which is a trap many business owners can fall into.

In your opinion, what are the biggest time wasters that hold business owners back from achieving their goals?

In no particular order:

1. Social media (a terrible invention in many regards)
2. Negative people and time wasters

3. Emails or apps that disrupt your flow
4. Following people's agenda and not your own
5. Unscheduled meetings/phone calls/people bursting into your office with no prior agreed outcome and timeline
6. Doing tasks that are not adding value to your business and/or that you are not good at (bookkeeping, design, etc.)
7. Unnecessary business travel
8. Being too accessible
9. Not knowing how and when to say a very important word in life and business: *No*
10. Anything that interrupts your time where your supposed to be productive

As a business owner, is it possible to stay in a state of high productivity all the time and if so how?

I don't know about all the time, but you can definitely snap out of unproductive states.

When you're in a rut, interrupt the pattern or the trigger. Did something annoy you in your office? Get out for a bit. Then whistle, help someone, sing and smile, even if you don't feel like it. Your mood will follow your body. Never make an important call or decision if you are in a bad state as this is something that can haunt you for months.

You can't always be highly productive unless you are super ultra-motivated, have a burning vision and want to create billion dollar companies — and you are willing to age fast! Everyone needs a holiday. When we do planning

“ Then whistle, help someone, sing and smile, even if you don't feel like it. ”

with our clients, the first thing that has to go in their diary is their holidays or they will never happen.

**A lot of business owners suffer from being overwhelmed.
How do you suggest business owners deal with this?**

Here are a few tips based on what I have learnt over the years:

- *Don't be overwhelmed* — It is not a normal state so either change your view on what you do so you enjoy it and count it as fun time or realise that you are doing something wrong. Some people who produce a lot and have even more responsibilities are not overwhelmed. It needs to be owned and understood before it can be solved.
- *Take a holiday* — You need to have time when you don't think about business or you will not be able to solve the problems that are plaguing you. Your brain can only get creative in certain waves and the problem-solving ones usually need a relaxed state.
- *Get help* — Find a good coaching company or person who has the ability to give you strategic input and reorganise your time or business model better. That may include doing less so you achieve more (yes, it happens all the time as you focus on what gives leverage and results). If you cannot afford it, speak to people who are more advanced than you. Ask them to spare a few minutes of their time and see what advice they can offer.

Are there any rituals you follow daily and also recommend to your clients?

Firstly, I do as much as I can of what I love: I go surfing usually in the morning as that cleans my mind and works all body parts. I try to go at least once a week, although if waves are good it can be up to twice a day.

Some of my key regular routines:

1. I try to remember to smile when I wake up
2. I exercise and stretch for 30 minutes when I wake up (otherwise there's a big chance it will never get done)
3. I eat light dinners most of the time
4. I wake up when I want to once a week
5. I always turn off data and screens a while before I go to sleep
6. I express gratitude every morning and take account of what yesterday brought to my life
7. I focus on my main aim in life and my goals for the day before I get on with things
8. When I get negative or tired I book a plane ticket and change my environment to get some perspective

With all that being said, everyone is different. Some people perform well without goals, some perform badly, even if they have them. In general, these little things usually tend to have a positive impact.

Why do some business owners get trapped in the day-to-day and never break free?

When you are part of the picture, it is difficult to see things clearly. You need someone to help you clarify what is going on so you can make effective changes. Time goes fast. One day turns into a week and a year and so on, then people settle for it until it burns bad enough or something happens that forces the issue to be looked at.

This acceptance of compromise is the great silent dream killer. We just get busy because it is the socially acceptable state to be in and we don't have (or take) the time to actually work on what counts. My advice is to work on getting out of the trap before life forces you

to do so, as it usually comes with much bigger pain and costs when it is not done voluntarily.

You also say, "Building wealth within the business is not just about growth.". What do you mean by that?

Business owners often focus on revenue growth, but if it means just paying more salaries and taxes, what is the point?

You need to either build a business that gives you free time and cash while supporting your health, build something which will have a resale value or create a passive income which will set you up for life. When it comes to money, people are usually short-sighted or confused. My business makes sure that all our clients take care of this within the modules we cover.

When you are in business, things can change quickly. You are the one responsible for your own financial well-being, yet most people never take care of making sure that their business is actually creating wealth.

If your business is under attack from aggressive competitors, what do you recommend a business owner should do?

Ideally, you should have seen it coming. It is always good to look at supply and demand in your market and trends so you know where things are going and you can get there early. Each change is an opportunity to tap into new incomes, but it can be destructive if you get stuck in your old ways.

The first way to ward off competitors is to create good relationships with your clients (say thank you, communicate regularly, always seek ways to provide them value, make sure they are satisfied, etc).

If you have a good brand and position with differentiation, and if you operate in a tight pocket and can create barriers to entry for

your competitors, this will help. If your whole industry or market segment is disrupted, you better think about your business model and value chain fast.

There are many other ways to get the better of the competition, even extreme ones such as buying your competitor. Usually, people who come with the lower prices stay around for two years and disappear. This can be a good thing as it forces the good operators to run more efficiently.

Sometimes, a few bad players ruin the market for everyone, but that is why you have to make the best of the good times to create wealth and never drop your guard. I read somewhere a lot of businesses who were at the top of the Fortune 500 in 2000 were no longer there in 2010. That is why we force our clients to look at their pillars and foundations regularly, even if they have by now already achieved massive success.

Is it easy to succeed in business?

It depends where you start and what you consider success to be.

If you start with a lot of capital in a monopoly then the only difficulty will be finding a way to get it wrong. For the majority of others, it is not easy. There will always be some people who come with the perfect product with the perfect timing and execute well, but this is a tiny portion and not the rule.

Some statistics show that the independent business owner failure rate is close to 90 per cent over a five year period. I read somewhere that the success rate for technology ventures has been assessed at a time at about 0.4 per cent. These numbers do not

“ Usually, people who come with the lower prices stay around for two years and disappear. ”

surprise me, especially when you know that the vast majority of people go into business thinking they will figure it all out by themselves.

You always get to see the overnight success story and the 19-year-old guys who have companies valued at billions of dollars. I have been behind the scenes and the full story always has distinctions and nuances. Those dream stories usually happen after many years of sweat and tears. It is great to inspire people, but it also creates the wrong expectations reinforced by people's natural tendency to want easy money.

What are your top tips to grow a more successful business?

I will keep this simple:

1. Keep your health, energy, and spirits up
2. Focus on sales
3. Guard your time like a hawk
4. It is not how much money you make, it is about the bottom line
5. Measure everything and take corrective actions
6. Get external insights and input, and find external contributors who will hold you accountable
7. Get good at understanding people and discovering what motivates them

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CHANCE TO IMPRESS



ROGER SIMPSON

“ The great thing about providing positive feedback is it only takes a few seconds. There is no excuse for managers and owners to not be doing this on a regular basis and reaping the rewards of a more motivated, happier workforce. ”

Roger Simpson

ROGER SIMPSON

Roger was born in Nelson, New Zealand, the youngest of five children. He enjoyed an idyllic childhood, spending hours exploring and playing all sorts of sports with his friends. He finally decided on soccer as his sport of choice and enjoyed success, playing for his province at a junior level.

After a rather poor final year at school, Roger's father was keen for him to get a job so at 16 years of age, Roger found himself working for the global giant Shell. After taking some time off to travel and work overseas, he returned to Shell in Wellington, taking on various positions around the company as his career progressed.

The challenge of taking on new roles came to a grinding halt when Roger was given the job of Retail Training Manager. This new 'career' really took flight after he met two inspiring training consultants and contracted them to work with Shell. From this point, Shell franchisees began queuing up to attend training programs.

Over the following years, Roger relocated to Shell Australia before being invited to run training programs in the UK and across Europe. After helping Shell Australia to achieve incremental sales in excess of \$15 million per annum, Roger left the company to become a full-time trainer and facilitator.

Starting out with two clients, Roger has now helped over 50 retail businesses to reap the rewards of excellent training. This passionate educator is excited to show his clients how to offer the best level of service and in turn how to increase their profits.

When not facilitating training courses, Roger enjoys a game of social golf. He keeps fit by walking in beautiful Mt Martha, where he has lived with his wife Andrea since 2013.

What made you decide to start your current business?

I was working for Shell NZ in the early nineties as their Retail Training manager. At the time, I believed this was a short-term role as I didn't see my long-term future in a training role. I had no previous training experience so I ran training courses without any knowledge of how people learn or how to present. I thought I was doing a great job until I met a couple of external expert trainers and we spent two days together reviewing our current training and looking at how it could be improved.

Halfway through this session I had a lightbulb moment — my current training content and processes sucked! I ended up working with the external trainers for the next three years, with amazing success. We actually had franchisees wanting to come to the training. These business owners put in place what they learnt back on the job and saw their sales increase and their people improve. I was hooked.

In early 1997, due to the success of our training in NZ, I was seconded to Melbourne to run the Retail Training for Shell Australia. One of the external trainers (Craig) was already doing some work in Australia so we teamed up again and had immediate success. News of our achievements spread overseas and Craig and I were invited to the UK to run a pilot with a group of stores. The result was another great success, with sales increasing and staff becoming more motivated.

This led to Craig's company being asked to run a number of training programs throughout the UK and Europe. Craig asked me to join them at the start of 1999. Doing so was one of the best decisions as I could then focus entirely on training people, a passion that has burnt inside me since that fateful day way back in the nineties.

What are some notable success stories?

One of our best results was when I first moved to Melbourne and started working with the Shell Australia franchisees. By combining

the strategy of having impulse items at the counter with simple yet non-pushy sales techniques, we helped Shell Australia grow additional sales in excess of \$15 million per annum. That was the start of rolling the program out across the UK and Europe.

I had the opportunity to run a trial with three liquor stores that were part of a 60 chain network. Luckily the GM of the group attended the training and when he saw the results achieved back in the stores after the training he was blown away. Sales of impulse items improved by over 200 per cent and staff who had never recommended additional products to customers were now happily having a go. This resulted in rolling the training out to all stores. I have had an ongoing relationship with this group over the past 11 years.

I have also had the pleasure of working with the iconic Beechworth Bakeries over the past 19 years and have helped them become one of the most customer focussed retailers in Australia. This partnership all started when I met Tom O'Toole, the owner, at a conference back in 2000. He invited me to see how I could help the Beechworth team and I have been working with them ever since. I helped them when they took over the bakery at Echuca as well as the other six bakeries they have built since then. I was extremely flattered when their MD,



Roger Simpson with the founder of Beechworth Bakery Tom O'Toole.

Marty Mattassoni, recently presented me with a staff name badge with my years of service on it.

What do you love about being in business?

I have always enjoyed guiding people towards success. It's a wonderful feeling to see someone grow and be more confident. To now have this as a focus for my business is absolutely brilliant and feeds my passion to help people.

I find most of the people I work with (store managers) have little or no understanding of how to get the best out of their team. More often than not, they were a staff member prior to becoming the manager and they now find themselves faced with having to set the rules and follow up. Most people aren't natural coaches so being able to train them in how to coach has resulted in many rewarding moments — particularly when a staff member who has struggled with a process receives feedback and then improves. It's the best feeling in the world

Who were your most memorable mentors?

Having started work in the corporate world and spent the best part of 20 years with Shell, I always had a boss to talk through ideas and challenges. Some weren't the best mentors but there were others I could seek advice from.

That all changed when I started to work for myself. Initially, I had a great business partner, Craig, who I learnt so much from. However, business, particularly small business changes and when Craig left I was on my own. I enjoyed the freedom at first but was investing nothing on my own learning despite running a training company that helps people improve. Quite ironic.

When you work for yourself, you have to seek outside help, otherwise you just keep doing the same thing over and over again. As soon

“ My advice for any business owner or anyone wanting to improve is to get a mentor. ”

as I attended one of Dale Beaumont's presentations I knew (with some prompting from my wife) that I needed to sign up. To be exposed to an avid learner willing to share his knowledge as well as being surrounded by like-minded, positive people is just what I needed.

Through Dale, I also met the wonderful Ari Galper, whose trust-based philosophy completely resonated with me. I have worked with Ari a number of times over the past seven years and he and his team have been great in challenging my thinking and helping me to grow.

My advice for any business owner or anyone wanting to improve is to get a mentor, listen to their advice and take action.

What are your top tips for running a successful organisation?

From my experience, I believe a successful business is all about having the right people so my tips are going to be focussed on this:

1. Recruit the right people in the first instance. Before doing anything, clearly identify what attributes the ideal person will have — this way you are more likely to know what you are looking for and know when you find it.
2. Set clear expectations and standards from the start. If your team don't know your expectations (or the customer's), how can they do the best job?
3. Provide initial and ongoing training so your team is the best they can be. I strongly believe most people want to do a great job so help them by training them to be exceptional. Training is also a great motivator for the young people of today who strive to be

better and see their own personal development as a critical part of the job.

4. Managers/owners must lead by example. You can't expect your team to listen to your advice but ignore your example.
5. Follow up and provide regular feedback. Just because someone has been trained doesn't mean they are going to keep doing the right thing. Habits are hard to break, yet most people are open to ways to improve. If they aren't, they shouldn't be working for you.

As Richard Branson said, "Train your people so well that they can easily leave and get a better job, treat them so well they won't want to." This is great advice from a very successful businessman that I believe every manager/owner should follow.

What are the main challenges facing businesses today?

There has been a lot spoken and written about the demise of traditional retail stores. In Australia, the advent of online shopping has taken around seven per cent of sales away from physical shopfronts. This figure is tipped to grow to around ten per cent in the next few years. There is a long way to go before it gets anywhere near taking over and I don't think it ever really will.

However, physical stores must have an online presence as these days it's all about the customer (as it should be). Customers want to buy when and how they want to buy, so stores have to offer both a physical store and the ability to search and buy online.

International competition is also a huge factor here in Australia. A number of massive overseas chains such as Uniqlo, H&M and Zara have set up shop and are trading well. This is taking sales from current retailers as the overseas players leverage their huge buying power to offer low prices. Coupled with the latest trends direct from overseas

they are certainly causing challenges for traditional Aussie retailers, such as Myer, David Jones and others.

Another huge challenge is staff. Retail is not seen as a career nowadays, more a transient fill-in role while people look for something better. This has resulted in difficulty for retailers in finding staff who are passionate and customer focussed.

The ongoing pressure of high rents, wages and reduced margins due to competition is another big issue facing every retailer. Staff wages are often the biggest cost so cutting back hours is seen as a way to combat this. This is a big problem as it often leaves stores short staffed. Customers receive little or no service so they end up not purchasing in store and instead going online to buy. It's a vicious cycle.

Keeping up to date with store refits so stores are not seen as being tired and out of date is very costly, yet necessary if retail businesses want to draw customers in. Customers also expect a highly contemporary shopping experience, resulting in stores benefiting from the addition of expensive and high tech technology.

It's a tough gig having physical stores, yet most customers still want to shop in store for the experience. Stores have to keep up to date and create a reason to buy in order to have the customer return.

Why do so many retailers offer poor experiences?

There are many reasons for poor customer experience. Here are my top three:

1. *Lack of feedback* — A lot of retailers believe they offer great service when they don't. They are oblivious to the poor service being offered up in their stores. This is often because there is no consequence for the poor service that is being provided. Staff

receive no feedback on whether they are doing a poor or great job so why would they try any harder?

2. *The wrong staff* — Some people simply shouldn't work in retail. They are either the wrong staff in the first place who don't like serving customers, or they have been around too long and have lost the service spark.
3. *Lack of staff* — This causes extra workload and takes staff away from serving customers. Unfortunately, some staff think that stocking shelves is more important than serving customers.

What should a retailer focus on?

Pretty simply, retail is all about people interacting with people. The better this interaction is, the better the customer will feel. As we say, "The rewarded customer buys, multiplies and comes back."

I believe retailers have to get more serious and rigorous about the staff they employ, how they induct and train them and how well they coach them. I fundamentally believe most staff want to do a great job and they don't deliberately do things wrong (although sometimes it can feel like it). Poor staff performance is more often because they receive little or no direction and feedback.

Retailers need to ensure all their staff feel part of the team. This is difficult when most retailers employ casual staff. Often casuals receive little or no training and support, yet they work at the busiest times. This is a great combination to disappoint more customers.

I believe managers need to spend more time on the floor, working with and observing their staff. This way, they can catch them doing things right and coach where they see opportunities

“Often casuals receive little or no training and support, yet they work at the busiest times.”

to improve. You can't do this from the office if you are stuck doing paperwork!

How should retailers deal with shoppers who 'try' in store but buy online?

Due to the growth of online, some customers use physical stores to try products before simply clicking and buying online. There is even a name for this, it's called 'showrooming'. I believe it represents only a small percentage of customers at this stage, however with most customers doing research online beforehand and easily now via their mobile phone, this challenge is ever present. I know this is very frustrating when a team member does all the work only for the customer to buy online.

The only way to combat this issue is to understand it will happen and accept that customers do want the best deal. However, staff members have the chance to impress when they have the customer face-to-face with them in store. By providing consistently excellent service, making customers the first priority and asking relevant questions about the product they are looking at, visiting your store will become preferable to shopping online. A number of customers buy online, misinformed, as they don't know what they don't know, so here's the big opportunity for the staff member to provide that great experience and really guide and help the customer. I'm not saying this will prevent every customer who intends to showroom, however it will give you the very best chance to impress the customer. They may not buy from you now, but there's a good chance they will in the future.

We can only combat online by providing a great experience in store, not when we feel like it but every single time. A large percentage of customers still want the in store experience, however if we make them wait, appear disinterested and offer poor service, that will drive them straight to their computer!

Why is training on its own a waste of time?

I learnt this valuable lesson many years ago. I thought that as a trainer it was my job to provide the training. If they didn't learn or use their new skills back on the job it wasn't my fault, it was theirs. Big mistake. Of course trainees have to take some responsibility, but there is a lot of onus on the person providing the training to get the following things right:

1. Is the content relevant to the trainee?
2. Is the content delivered in a fun and interactive way that encourages the trainee to learn?
3. Can the trainee use the information provided easily once they are back on the job?
4. What support will the trainee receive when they return to their workplace?

I believe the biggest area where most training courses fail is with step number four. Too many times, staff are sent to a course and when they return their manager doesn't even discuss the training with them, let alone look for a behaviour change. All training has to be followed up or the trainee will simply return to their old habits. When training doesn't work, it often doesn't mean the training was poor, it's probably because it wasn't supported and followed up back on the job.

What is the Amazon effect and how can it be overcome by Australian businesses?

Amazon has been incredibly successful in the US so there is no reason not to believe it will do the same in Australia. With their incredible access to data on their customers' buying habits, this company is extremely well situated to offer just what customers want. Add in

their massive purchasing power and that means lower prices (most of the time) on a large range of products.

Amazon's focus on service ensures customers have a great experience online, lowering the barriers to purchase. They know how to sell products online and that will be a massive threat to not just online retailers in Australia but every retailer.

It's another nail in the coffin for retailers who don't innovate and don't differentiate. Retailers have to give customers a reason to visit their stores and when they do, they had better offer great service or run the risk of losing that customer forever. The only way to combat a giant like Amazon is to be the best at what you do at all times.

What can you share about your experience working with Disney?

One of the most memorable experiences I have had was spending two days at the Disney Institute in Los Angeles a few years back, along with my friends from the Beechworth Bakery. The Disney Institute is an internal training organisation that runs public courses in a number of areas, giving outsiders the opportunity to learn first-hand what makes their service so outstanding. It was an opportunity not to be missed. Disneyland is acclaimed in the key area of customer service and to be able to take a look behind the scenes was invaluable.

Our itinerary consisted of two days at the Disney Institute, attending their course on "The Disney Approach to People Management". This was followed by two days in the park actually experiencing the service provided to guests. The course covered five key topics:

1. The Disney culture
2. How they recruit staff (cast members)
3. The training they provide to cast members

4. How they communicate with their cast members (22,000 in LA and 65,000 in Orlando — that's a lot of staff!)
5. Ways they recognise and reward their team members

There were so many great learning points that every retailer should focus on to improve their overall service experience. Here are my top three:

1. Disney focuses on finding the best cast members to employ. They use a rigorous process to ensure they get people who match with the culture and fit of Disneyland. One clever tactic they use to screen people out of the process is to present very early on in the recruitment process, their list of non-negotiables. Any potential cast members who don't agree with any of these are simply removed from the process. This is a great way to ensure potential new staff are very clear on the expectations before they start. Out of this, the Beechworth Bakery developed their own non-negotiables and brilliantly called it "The Baker's Dozen".
2. Training is an absolute obsession with Disneyland. New cast members receive three days of classroom training before moving into their role, where they receive an additional five days to eight weeks on the job training. Their internal trainers are the most trained as they know they have to always be exemplary. They are big on setting their people up to succeed.
3. On the job follow up is an essential part of every manager's daily process. They know that just because they provide great training, without follow up they can't guarantee cast members will perform their duties at the high level expected. Every day, managers have to complete three observations of their team members performing their duties and provide them with feedback. Cast members are aware of this process before they commence employment (via the non-negotiables) so it's an accepted way to ensure everyone is performing at the high level expected by every guest at any time. If only Australian retailers were this disciplined, how amazing would our service be!

Why do business owners struggle with feedback?

After facilitating training courses to thousands of business owners and managers over the past 20 years, one of the biggest weaknesses I have witnessed is a lack of ability to provide effective feedback. A number of managers/owners are very hesitant to provide feedback. They think it will end up in an argument so they just avoid it altogether.

The number one reason for the widespread lack of feedback is that most managers/owners have never been shown how to deliver it. It's a natural skill only a few possess and very few people receive training on how to provide effective feedback. Many try and copy the way they were given feedback by a current or previous boss and when this doesn't work they either try some other way or just give up.

Another reason for insufficient feedback is a lot of store managers get promoted because they are great at customer service and sales. The problem is, it's a whole different skill set managing a team compared to managing yourself. The team won't follow your lead just because you are the best salesperson.

Feedback needs to be given in the moment, ideally as soon as the right or wrong behaviour has been witnessed. This is another issue, in that managers/owners are either too busy and don't notice when their team members do something wrong or right or they are too busy to provide the feedback right then. When feedback is provided too long after the issue, it is often wasted as the staff member can't remember what actually happened.

Is there a formula for delivering feedback?

Most managers and owners struggle with providing feedback. There are time constraints, they don't know what to say or they expect the staff member to get defensive. No one likes being criticised so to create a positive outcome feedback has to be constructive. The

person providing the feedback should avoid blaming language and be encouraging.

There is a feedback process for when a team member is not doing the right thing that we have used for many years. It can be applied to any age group, across all different industries and for any situation. We call this type of feedback improvement feedback. It is broken down into four simple parts which are:

1. What's the issue? Deal in the facts — What did the staff member say or do (or not say or do)
2. Get them involved by asking these questions;
 - a) How could you improve for next time?
 - b) Why is it important to do it that way?
3. Get a commitment from them to change for next time
4. Catch them doing it right as soon as you can

When you follow a simple process like this, it takes away any blame and judgement. It also forces the staff member to think and come up with an answer to solve the issue or confirm that they know why doing it the right way is important.

Unfortunately, most managers/owners struggle with these steps, particularly steps two and four. Most think it's their job to tell the staff member what they are doing wrong and how to fix it, while the staff member simply just nods and smiles. Did they understand or take the feedback on board? If you tell them the answer, you'll never know.

The beauty of the improvement feedback model is that it's relatively quick. It takes around 15 to 25 seconds

“ The person providing the feedback should avoid blaming language and be encouraging. ”

so it can be used on the job and doesn't require the staff member to come to the office. I have observed this process being used many times and it works 99 per cent of the time.

How do you catch people doing it right?

One of the simplest things a manager or owner can do to motivate their team is to provide positive feedback when they witness them doing something right. This is so powerful when it follows on from providing improvement feedback. It tells the team member that their manager actually cares enough to follow up and that they are committed to helping them be successful.

However, what most managers/owners do is the exact opposite. They focus on what their team members are doing wrong and make sure they tell them, yet they miss the opportunity to motivate them by providing praise. We all love praise. It lifts us up and makes us feel appreciated. Unfortunately, some managers and owners struggle to provide it.

We recommend staff should receive at least four to five times more positive feedback than improvement feedback. The great thing about providing positive feedback is it only takes a few seconds. There is no excuse for managers and owners to not be doing this on a regular basis and reaping the rewards of a more motivated, happier workforce.

How do retailers deal with a temporary workforce?

Retail has become more of a transient industry for workers rather than a place to learn great skills and make a career. Long gone are the days of retail traineeships and a number of retailers provide little or no training to their workforce. It's no wonder people move in and out of this industry so quickly. My feeling is that retail seems to be the fall-back position. If someone can't make it in another career, they simply get a job in retail to tide them over until something else comes along.

This is exacerbated by retailers who employ staff to fill a role rather than focus on what type of person is best for the role and go about finding the right person. Additionally, retailers need to hire large numbers of staff for the pre-Christmas shopping period. These people often are poorly screened and they receive little or no induction and training. They are recruited on the understanding that they only have a role for a few weeks so their care factor is a lot lower. This all leads to the wrong staff being employed, either temporary or long term. The result is poor customer service that annoys shoppers.

Another factor that is impacting retail is the growth in employing casual workers. I understand the need for a more casual workforce as it provides retailers with much more flexibility with rostering. The problem I have with casuals is exactly that — their job description — ‘casual’.

When I talk to these staff in store and I ask what they do, they often say, “I’m just a casual.” Unfortunately, that describes their work attitude. I’m not saying all casuals are like this, some are amazing because they have the right attitude. The problem is that a lot feel disconnected from the other team members due to lack of training and little or no inclusion.

Here are my recommendations on what retailers can do to help reduce staff turnover, improve the focus of casual workers and provide more of a career path to all employees:

- *Get the recruitment process right* — Focus on employing the right people, with the right attitude, even if it’s just for a short-term role. These people should love serving customers and be open to feedback. As we always say, “Hire for attitude and train for skills.”
- *Provide a proper induction for all staff* — Even those in short term roles. A big reason why a lot of staff leave is due to poor induction.
- *Make sure all staff receive initial and ongoing training* — This will enable them to perform the job to the right level.

- *Provide regular feedback* — Particularly positive feedback. This helps inspire and motivate as well as letting staff know you care.
- *Find out each staff member's goals and ambitions* — Talk to them about their career path and work with them to help them achieve this.
- *Provide non-work related training* — Younger team members are very focussed on learning new skills. If possible, offer flexible hours and additional training opportunities.
- *Make the workplace a fun place* — Staff are motivated to turn up and do their absolute best if they enjoy what they do.

Running your own business can be tough. What keeps you motivated?

I'm one of the lucky ones who has found a job I absolutely love. For me, most days don't feel like work at all. I am able to combine my passion of helping people with the role of training people and I enjoy facilitating training courses that attendees often rate as the best training course they have been to. Who wouldn't enjoy regular feedback like that?

I have also been blessed with working with amazing clients over the past 20 years. Some, like the team at the Beechworth Bakeries, I have worked with for almost 20 years. I have been able to get to know a large number of the team very well. I am constantly motivated when companies ask me back to run ongoing training sessions as this is a sign they see great value in the training we provide. I have been lucky over the years as most clients ask us back!

I also love the opportunity we create with most clients of following up in store after a training session. As part of this process, we work with Regional/Area Managers to help them coach their store managers to coach their team members, effectively putting in place what they have just learnt at the training session. I have experienced many

memorable moments whilst doing this, when a team member who has struggled with a particular area of service receives improvement feedback and immediately improves. I have witnessed many team members make a sale when they thought they couldn't and it's such a positive experience.

I facilitate fun and interactive training courses that make a real difference, to wonderful clients. It is the job I was born to do so it is easy to feel motivated every day.

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Roger Simpson has kindly offered a BONUS GIFT valued at \$24.95 to all readers of this book.

The Ultimate Retail Sales Experience — Roger Simpson reveals the truth about the retail industry's struggle to provide quality customer service. With levels of dissatisfaction and competition at an all-time high, businesses that don't improve this key component are letting millions of dollars in sales walk out the door. In this ebook, Roger offers tips and step-by-step strategies for creating long-term success.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

We imagine that by now your head is probably spinning with a multitude of strategies and dozens of new ideas to grow your business.

Despite the title of this book, there really is no great secret to being a successful business leader or entrepreneur. As this book demonstrates, all that you require to succeed is freely available, as long as you have the drive, courage and ‘smarts’ to actively seek out what you need to know.

However, the real driver of success is simply *implementation* – the ability to put into practise, and take action on the things you hear and read. After years of working with people we have seen that this rarely happens by simply reading something once. It comes from re-reading, reflecting and then applying – not just once, but until it becomes a habit and part of your life.

With this in mind our strongest recommendation is that you do this exercise: re-read each of the chapters of this book, and with a notepad and pen by your side, write your answers to these two questions:

- What are the three most important things I’ve learnt from this chapter?
- How can I implement these learnings into my life, starting today?

Yes, we know that it is going to take some time, but as they say, the only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary. And we’re not talking about physical work, a bit of solid thinking is all

it takes. So give it a try, after a few short weeks you'll be amazed at the impact it will have.

Also, as we said in the preface of this book, you are your most valuable asset so make sure you keep investing in yourself. That is why we have provided the many bonuses for you. Make sure you go to the webpage (that's if you haven't already) and download all of the gifts. They contain some fantastic material, which you will wholeheartedly enjoy.

In closing, remember this: 'Nobody can go back to the beginning and make a brand-new start. But everyone can start from now and make a brand-new end', so begin on your path now! Don't worry about the past, and don't worry that you don't know enough – you probably never will. Just make a start, begin on your path today and continue learning as you go.

We trust that you've enjoyed this book. It has been a real honour to work with these amazing people and share their stories. Take their ideas to heart, put them into action and watch your dreams soar.

DREAM BIG!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Beaumont". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 't'.

Dale Beaumont

P.S. We love receiving letters or emails from people who have been inspired by something shared in one of our books, so please contact us with your stories of inspiration.

<http://dalebeaumont.com/contact>

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FREE GIFT # 5 (\$25.00) Insights into Creating a High-Performance Company Culture — In this ebook, Michael Henderson shares a powerful collection of the elements organisations need to understand to optimise their

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FREE GIFT # 10 (\$295.00) Financial Strategy Session — As entrepreneurs, we need control of our finances so we can succeed in business. John Di Natale has made himself available to give you a free Financial Strategy Session. This opportunity will allow you to identify the risks in your current situation, get clear on your wealth creation goals and develop a plan for achieving them.

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About the author

DALE BEAUMONT

Dale Beaumont is best known as an Award-Winning Technology Entrepreneur, International Speaker and Best-Selling Author.

Having started his first business at the age of 19, Dale went on to build three different million-dollar companies before the age of thirty.

One of these companies saw Dale write and publish 16 books, which have collectively sold over a quarter of a million copies. Incredibly, 11 of those 16 books were published in a single year, a feat that earned him the title 'Australia's Most Prolific Author'.

This was followed by the launch of Business Blueprint, an education company designed to help ambitious entrepreneurs build the business of their dreams. Ten years on, Dale has personally trained over 50,000 people and produced over 1,000 business training videos.

In 2015, Dale decided to go global, setting a goal to help one million people discover the blueprint for business success. To achieve this, Dale and his team launched Biziversity — a revolutionary product which offers direct access to 'The World's Best Business Training. Anywhere, Anytime.'

Best described as the 'Netflix for Business', Biziversity gives you exclusive access to over 1,000 TV-quality videos, presented by over 250 leading business experts from around the globe.

As a result of Dale's success, he has been interviewed on Today Show, Mornings, Sky News Business, ABC Radio as well as being featured in over 100 newspapers and magazines, including *Forbes*, *The Huffington Post*, *Business Insider*, *Gizmodo*, *Men's Health* and *GQ*.

After becoming a father in 2007, Dale decided to dedicate more time to his family. Following the formula of 'two months work, one month adventure', Dale and his family have now travelled to over 75 countries. This includes stepping foot on all seven continents (yes even Antarctica), visiting all five Disneyland parks and volunteering in several orphanages.

For the last five years, Dale and his wife Katherine have been supporting the charity 'Hands Across the Water'. By partnering with Business Blueprint clients, they have now collectively raised over \$1,500,000, which now supports 350 children with food, education, medical needs and most importantly love.

About our **CONTRIBUTORS**

We would again like to say a huge ‘thank you’ to the amazing people who have helped to make this book possible. Some of them have their own books and other educational products – for more information, feel free to contact them directly.

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Dale Beaumont



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More recently, Dale has decided to go global and launch Bizversity — a revolutionary learning platform, which gives you direct access to ‘The World’s Best Business Training. Anywhere, Anytime.’

Best described as the ‘Netflix for Business’, Bizversity gives you exclusive access to over 1,000 TV-quality videos, presented by over 250 leading business experts from around the globe.

As a result of Dale’s success, he has been featured in Forbes, The Huffington Post, Business Insider, Gizmodo and GQ, to name a few.

On a personal note, Dale is married to wife Katherine and is a father to two fast-growing boys.

For more information
VISIT DALEBEAUMONT.COM

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