



BUSINESS \$\$ DEVELOPMENT

TRICKS YOU NEED
TO KNOW



www.DAVIDLENNON.com.au

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Congrats

When it comes to Business Development, the secret is to never stop learning, seeking and experimenting with new strategies. Congratulations on exploring these strategies. And checkout my [website](#), [facebook page](#) and posts for more strategies and workshops.

Why Read This Book?

I've carefully selected these strategies because:

- ✓ They can each be read in under 5 minutes.
- ✓ They can generate immediate new sales the same day or at least within a week. You don't have to wait.
- ✓ I've proven they work with my businesses and my client's. In fact many of them are secrets I've discovered the hard way.

Who is this Book For?

This book is for startups, sole-traders and SME's.

Feel free to share and I trust you will benefit. Enjoy!

All the best and wishing you health, wealth and happiness.

If you have any questions at all or would like to go deeper into any of the strategies, or share a win, feel free to contact me.

David Lennon

www.davidlennon.com.au

<mailto:david@davidlennon.com.au>

Business Success Coach and Entrepreneur, Melbourne, Australia
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"If you want something you've never had, you must be willing to do something you've never done"

Thomas Jefferson

But how do you know what to do?

This book contains a few suggestions! :)

Your Cheat Sheet

ARTICLE	KEY THINGS TO DO OR REMEMBER
Strategies to Help Take Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Get a big enough why. What will it cost you, give you, and will it take you to your vision?2. Is it aligned with your values? If not...you may find it hard to follow through.3. Are you focusing on the hard work, failure - or the positives, what you will gain from doing it?
Boost Your Sales by Consulting Staff and Customers	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Give your staff a voice, and listen, and act. Put the ideas on a whiteboard and cross them off as you go. Culture!2. Ask customers at least 2x per year what you do well, what they would like you to do or sell. Keeps you relevant to your customer...and in business!3. Use customer feedback to identify why they bought from you, and use these reasons in your sales pitch and make sure your website and marketing collateral includes them.
Boost Business with your Vision and Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hire better - use your vision and values in job ads, to help write ads and then check candidates against. Will they help take your business to your vision? Do they live and work by the same values?2. Check your website and marketing collateral against your vision and values. Do they match?3. Share your vision and values with staff and customers. We buy 'people' not just a product or service.
Looking for Growth? Do Less	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. More is not always better. How good could your product or service be if you culled some less profitable items and really focused on a core few? How would the standard change? How would the customer experience improve?2. Involve your team in deciding what to cull and brainstorm what other features or improvements could happen with more time and resources?3. Read 'From Good to Great' by Jim Collins.
Are You Asking Your Customers to Marry You on the First Date?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. One click or one call and asking for a sale is like proposing on the first date!2. Devise a 7 date campaign as a minimum.3. Start with a kiss - what small product or service can you offer to get them started? Even a freebie.4. If you need to repair a bad experience, make sure you provide tangible evidence the source of the problem has been fixed.

<p>Simple Tool to Improve the Effectiveness of Your Website and Brochures</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unpack any facts you have written and turn them into benefits. 2. Rephrase statements about spending money to how much the customer will save. Same for time.
<p>Marketing is the Last Thing You Need!!</p>	<p>Before ramping up your marketing, make sure you have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirm what are your profitable products/services that you should sell more of. 2. Investigate any and all factors within the business that may be affecting sales. Could be a process, person or equipment. 3. Look to existing customers first for more sales. 6x cheaper than finding new customers. 4. Explore existing customer networks, clubs, associations etc you might be able to leverage off of. 5. Brainstorm ways or get help on how to convert more of your existing leads. 6. After doing the above, you can advertise for new customers. 7. Brainstorm a fresh approach, shake it up, do something radical and different.
<p>How to Write a Winning Email</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 80% of people only read the subject heading. Spend half your time on content, and half your time on the heading. 2. Include bullet points to make it easier to see your benefits. 3. Explain how you will move them from pain to pleasure. 4. Make sure you describe the benefits, not just the features. 5. Always include a 'ps' with an important hook, reminder, benefit.
<p>Google Adwords Help You Uncover New Markets</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use adwords to help identify what product or service has the greatest demand. 2. Use adwords to test demand in new suburbs, states or even overseas.
<p>Tell Them They Probably Don't Need It</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask in a curious way if XYZ would be of interest to them, because other clients are asking for it. 2. Let the customer explain why the product/service would be good for them. 3. Removes the pressure of actually trying to sell them something.
<p>Make an Extra 20% Profit Without Increasing Sales</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workout your profit margins and make sure you include your salary and the real number of hours required to promote, sell and service your products. 2. Cull unprofitable packages and/or change prices.
<p>Maximise Profits Before and During the Festive Season</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start your marketing for Xmas no later than September. 2. Ask your customers if there is anything they should buy now before

	<p>the Xmas crazy period. Or at least book jobs in.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Offer something for January that will help them make the most of a quieter January (if it is quiet for them). Installation, training, audits. 4. Use the quieter post Xmas period to work ON your business. 5. Hold a group brainstorming session with staff to identify ways to improve efficiencies and customer satisfaction.
<p>Mental Game of Business</p>	
<p>To Succeed in Business, Get Comfortable Feeling Uncomfortable</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every achievement in your life is preceded by a period of uncomfortableness. It can't be avoided. 2. Recognise it for what it is. Focus on the good stuff on the other side of it. It will pass, always does, always will. Just like a storm. 3. The more comfortable you get with feeling uncomfortable, the more you will achieve.
<p>Trick Your Brain into Success</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask... 'How can I (we) afford it' rather than 'we can't afford it'. 2. Use... 'I don't know yet' instead of 'I don't know'. 3. Use... 'I'm seeking clarification' instead of 'I'm confused'.
<p>Secrets to Better Goal Setting</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is your motivation to actually do the work not as big as your motivation to make the goal? Break goals down into bite size pieces. 2. Slips up happen. Don't give up just because of a slip up! 3. Get an accountability partner to hold you accountable and provide support. 4. To stay motivated with long term goals, reward yourself or your team. Even small rewards like a break, a coffee, exercise, acknowledgement. 5. Goals must be aligned with your core values.
<p>Are You the Adult, Parent or Child in Your Business?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As an adult you take responsibility for results and delegate. 2. A parent boss believes they know best, staff can't be trusted, and don't delegate well. 3. As a child boss, you don't take responsibility, blame others, want to play, and resent being told what to do by a parent. 4. When in a less than perfect business situation, examine whether you are being an adult, parent or child.

General Business Tips

<p>Don't Flog a Dead Horse!</p>	<p>Signs your horse may be dead:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You've been at it for 3 years or more and it still isn't working. 2. You are getting no or limited repeat business. 3. You've lost your mojo. Going to work is a struggle.
<p>Quick Tips for Online Pricing</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End your prices with a 7. \$197 is more appealing than \$199. There is something about '7' that we like. 2. End your prices with an odd number. They are perceived as smaller than even numbers. 3. Put your discounted price in MUCH BIGGER FONT than the original to make the discount seem even bigger.
<p>11 Mistakes Startups Make</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Telling investors you will gain 1% of the market. Too small. 2. Scaling too soon in anticipation of great sales and then running out of money. 3. Partnering - focus on sales rather than joining with another company. 4. Pitching rather than prototyping. Prototypes prove your worth far better than a pitch. 5. Pitches that are too long. 10-20-30 rule. Max of 10 slides, 20 mins, 30 size font. 6. Expecting to do things in a sequential manner. As a startup, you need to be raising money, building prototypes, marketing, planning, selling all at the same time. 7. Expecting control if you own 51% of your company. If you have investors, they will have significant control. Fact of life. 8. Patents do not equal 100% protection. Don't spend lots of time emphasising you have patents when talking to investors. Mention it once only. 9. Hiring people that are too much like you. Make sure you hire people that fill the skill and experience gaps you don't fill. 10. Expecting Venture Capitalists to be your friend. They are in the business of making money, not friends. 11. Expecting Venture Capitalists to do the heavy lifting. They provide money and maybe 2-3 hours' advice per month.
<p><i>Don't Make These Mistakes Supplying to Retailer Outlets!</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume the retailers and staff know enough about your product. Never ever ever assume they do or have read your material. Ask the retailer what format they prefer the info. 2. The retailer doesn't know your story, how your product came to be, why it's better, what is unique about it, the care or quality involved etc. We buy stories, not just a physical product.

3. Assume the staff promote your product over competitors. Get friends, colleagues, anyone, to do some secret shopping and find out what staff really say about your product compared to competitor's products.
4. Not updating the retailer regularly on benefits, new uses, popularity of your product. The squeaky wheel gets the oil. Be front of mind.
5. Not checking every few months to confirm new staff know about your product. Retail staff don't tend to stick around for long.
6. Ask your retailers what improvements you should consider. They are at the coal face talking to your customers and can be closer to your customer needs.

NEW!

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

TRAINING & MENTORING, 1:1 or groups

Ideal for:

- Senior consultants and professionals (eg. Accountants, engineers, IT consultants) that need to win work but don't have the strategies and anyone to help guide them
- Sales people that are moving into a business development role and need to generate more leads, expand into new markets, prepare a business development plan, improve efficiencies, increase customer satisfaction
- Business owners that want to understand the process and gain the skills.

How Does It Work?

I have 7 core modules to choose from covering mindset for success (includes DISC and Calliper psychometric profiling), strategies to win more work from existing customers or proposals, how to win new customers (or new tenders) and how to find and capture completely new markets. You can choose a module or mix and match.

First step is to discuss your goals and stretches and confirm what you need. We then work together face to face or via phone/skype. Some clients I catch-up with for 15mins once a week and others I work with them for an hour a week. I provide strategies, templates, worksheets, videos, supporting info to facilitate the process and get you hitting your goals quickly. Most clients see improvements within one week.

**If interested, just give me a call or send an email:
0400 520 471 | david@davidlennon.com.au**

1. Strategies to Help You Take Action

If you find yourself wanting to take action, but then procrastinating, review the following for potential answers as to why.

Your 'Why' isn't Big Enough

If you don't have a big enough 'why', you will find it hard to follow through.

To confirm your 'why'... use these 3 questions:

<i>What will it give me?</i>	Financial, professional, personal. Not just money but other things such as credibility, less stress, more personal time. Anything and everything that is important to you.
<i>What will it cost me?</i>	Financial, professional, personal. Same as above.
<i>Will it take me to my vision?</i>	This is key. You can substitute 'vision' with 'goal'. Get real, be honest, is going to take you towards it or divert you off somewhere else?

TIP: helpful to write them down. Frees up the brain to effectively analyse them.

Is It Aligned with Your Values

First, know your values. If the task is not aligned with your values, you will find it hard to follow through. Explore this, meditate on it, whatever. It can be the key that unlocks a history of procrastination (and critical self talk!).

Are you Focusing on the Hard Work?

Our actions are the offspring of what we have been focusing on...and the meaning we have given it. Think of it this way, we all tune into an FM station – focus and meaning. If you have been focusing on the hard work, challenge or fear of doing a task, you will have a hard time following through.

The fact is, our brains are wired to help us avoid pain over gaining pleasure. Our brains are biologically designed to focus on the 'pain' of doing something in order to keep us 'safe'.

Therefore, you must consciously focus on the gains, ie 'what it will give you'. Use the first strategy of confirming your why to help motivate you to take action.

TIP: Daydream about the great feeling of achieving it. How would you feel and what would you be doing and gaining? The more you daydream on the gains and the more vivid you can make them, the greater the neurological connection you will have that motivates instead of de-motivates you.

You may find it helpful to put it on a post-it note and on your wall, desk, fridge etc as a regular reminder.

2. Sales Secrets and Tips

Boost Your Sales by Consulting Your Staff and Customers

You only need to consult two sources for the answers in how to boost your business - your **staff** and your **customers**.



How to consult with staff for business boosting ideas

Staff are at the coal face dealing with issues and hearing complaints and compliments. They are a great source of insights into what is causing excessive time, repeated issues or repeated requests for a new service. Make sure you are tapping into this resource.

Step 1: Give them a voice

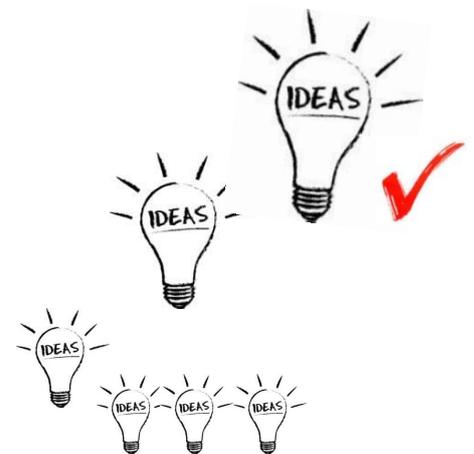
Have a brainstorming session (provide lunch or cake) and put all their ideas and issues on a whiteboard and don't disregard anything, so they know you are open to their ideas.



TIP: if you want ideas to flow, write the dumb ideas down too! As soon as you start critiquing ideas, you are signalling a 'pass' and 'fail' scenario and this can trigger insecurities, self doubt, a need to 'get it right', and basically shut down the flow. Get the ideas flowing and written down and cull the less useful later.

Step 2: Rank the ideas and issues in order of impact

This can vary depending upon your goal. For example, if your ultimate goal is to increase profit by reducing the number of times staff need to return to a customer to sort out a problem, which issue, if you stopped it from happening ever again would have the biggest impact on reducing the reason you need to do repeat visits?



Or if you need to increase customer satisfaction so they buy again, what issue would have the greatest impact if fixed?

Carefully rank them in order of greatest impact to the business.

Step 3: The fix

After ranking the ideas, brainstorm ways to fix them with the team. You will probably end up with some easy cheaper fixes and more complex costly fixes.

Assign responsibility to individuals to carry out the fixes and agree on a deadline.

It is better if you allow staff to volunteer for the various jobs so there is greater ownership and increased likelihood it will happen.



Step 4: Rollout the fixes

Rollout the fixes and review and acknowledge improvements on a regular basis so it maintains momentum and support. It's important that you score goals and that issues are resolved. This can take weekly meeting to monitor and adapt how you tackle the issues. Stay on top of it as the business owner. Otherwise enthusiasm will evaporate.

This exercise should be an annual exercise in any business at a minimum. I would recommend every 6 months or every 3 months.



Why You Should Listen to Customers, and How

You don't have a business without your customers. Who better to ask for feedback? Customers are the source of three great things you can use to help improve your business:

1. Ask them what you are doing well

If your customers give you feedback on what you are doing well and why they bought from you, [this is marketing gold!](#) Don't waste it!

They are confirming for you the benefits they received. Too many businesses fall into the trap of only talking about features and technical specs, rather than benefits.

Make sure your marketing material and your website has ample words describing the benefits of your product or service, ie the benefits that customers told you. Go and check it right now!

For example, one of my business clients focused on describing their professional qualifications and experience - which all their competitors did as well so there was no real point of difference. But when I reviewed their compliments from customers, accuracy of results kept coming up as the main reason the customer was happy or continued to use them. Bingo! This matched the business values and is a point of difference so their tagline became 'Results You Can Trust'.

A client with a team doing inspections, had repeated compliments for showing up on time. This was obviously important to the customer, but previously not mentioned in their pitch or website. Another client has had zero returns of their product installed on campervans. A great testament to the quality construction and now used as evidence in their marketing.

What are your customers telling you verbally (or in testimonials) that you do well?

Are you covering this on your website? In sales calls? In brochures?

Another gem to look for is the feature or action that got your customer across the line when selecting you? Mentioning this reason on your homepage and in your promotional material could make all the difference.

Some additional questions to explore:

- ? Can you do more of what they like? Can you take it up a notch and do it even better?
- ? Are you wasting time and money on a service that they don't really care about and wouldn't miss if you stopped it?
- ? Can you direct this time and money into the service they really love and value - see point above?

Careful! Don't fall into the trap of 'assuming' you know why they buy. Ask!

2. Get written or video testimonials

Use their positive feedback as testimonials on your website and in your promo material and your quotes. It can be challenging to ask for testimonials. But remember if they are repeat customers they like your product or service so will usually be happy to provide a testimonial. You can offer to make it anonymous if they are concerned.

3. Ask customers what else they want

Please, if nothing else, ask your customers once a year what else they would like. It's a gold mine that so many businesses fail to tap into. Essential if you want to stay relevant to your customers and avoid competing on price.



Place a pre-printed note pad and suggestion box in reception, put the request out with a

thank you email at the end of each sale, take them to lunch or for a coffee and ask them...doesn't have to be anything complicated or fancy. My tip is to stress it can be small or big suggestion - encourage them to offer anything, even if they think it isn't possible or not significant.

Example...

GOT A SUGGESTION?

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR IT! BIG, SMALL, SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE - WE WANT TO KNOW

HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU BETTER? MAKE YOUR PURCHASE EASIER?
IS THERE SOMETHING WE CURRENTLY DON'T OFFER THAT YOU WOULD LIKE US TO?

Thanks!

Name (optional)
Contact (optional)

Most customers never bother to suggest what could be done better or what else they'd like. They assume the service and product is the best it's going to be.

Danger! They assume you are the best you can be and your competitor comes along and has taken care of solving the minor (or major) gripe they have and steals them from you.

You don't have to implement big expensive changes to make a useful difference to your customer. Don't hold back on innovating because you think it must be big.

One of my business clients received orders from dentists. He found out that the admin people sending him the orders would appreciate pre-labelled boxes. Very easy fix. However, it made his service that extra bit easier and more pleasant.

Attention to improving the small details is what makes the difference between average and absolutely awesome companies.

Boost Business with Your Vision and Values

If you don't have a vision for your business written down and regularly used, you are missing out. Here's 3 ways you should be using your vision statement to boost your business.

Hire the right people

Assess existing staff and candidates you are interviewing by asking yourself this question, "Will this person take my business towards my vision?"

"Do they share the same values?"

You might be surprised at the answer! I've seen businesses owners that are chronic bad hirers - rarely getting the right people for the job - turn things around just by doing this.

You also attract better candidates when you include your vision (and top 3 values) in your job ads. It can scare away the one's that are not serious and motivate the one's that resonate with it. And that is what you want.

Employees are one of your biggest expenses in business and are like the wheels on your car, you will go nowhere without them - therefore make sure they are the right wheels to take you to your vision.

Test your marketing and branding

Test your marketing material with your vision statement, and values.

Hold your marketing and your vision side by side and ask yourself if there is a match.

For example, does your website, your branding, your choice of wording, your offers, your pricing, match your vision? Your Values?

Are they in alignment? Does your marketing take your business towards your vision?

Not only do you get better alignment, using this method can help identify what marketing to go with.

Share it!

Don't hide your Vision or Values. Especially if you depend upon repeat business.

We 'buy' people, not just products. Think about when you are shopping for products or services. How important is the actual person in the business doing the selling? As a customer, we are looking for certainty, and we don't like 'mystery', therefore the more we know about the values and vision of a business, the more certain and safer we feel.

Put your Vision and Values on the wall in a respectful frame, put them on quotes, on your website, in your email signatures. If it's your vision, it's worth sharing.

Be proud of them! If you aren't proud of them, then your staff and customers won't be either and guess what that means?

Remember, to achieve any vision, you have to first be sold on it yourself. Live it, breathe it.

With any goal, you must have it in your heart and head before you can have it in your hand.

Looking for Growth? Do Less

Can you 'GoPro' your business or organisation?? Do you ever feel in a race to offer more for less?

Marketing and media help fuel 'more for less'. But I love what GoPro did and how they created a Blue Ocean by offering less - a video camera with only 3 buttons - and as a result created 'more'.

As a business consultant, I've helped many businesses and organisations become more effective and achieve amazing growth by offering less. And as a business owner and lover of creating 'new things', I've certainly fallen into the trap of adding more and spreading the business too thin!

The book 'Good To Great' by Jim Collins identified after 5yrs of research that an essential ingredient for creating a truly great company was to be brutally honest about what the company COULD be great at, not what their ego's WANTED to be great at.

Focus on what you are (or could be) truly very very good at delivering.

Are there services or products that are a struggle for you to deliver?

Be honest.

Or are there services that take up your time and money to fix or soothe unhappy customers? Or worse, unleash a negative word of mouth cancer amongst your customers so you never receive referrals? Perhaps its time to cull them?

Tip: you can do a SWOT analysis on each service or product (and include the annual profit it delivers) to help weed out the duds.



Involve the team

Rather than brainstorm with the team what else you should be offering to keep up with the competition and then spending time and money on rolling that out, try brainstorming a list of what you do really really well (as confirmed by customers, not just you).

Put it on a white board or flipchart. Reflect on it. Analyse it. Discuss it.

And then play a game of imagining how you could deliver that product or service even better or for more customers - if you focused on it. Discuss that with the team and see where it takes you.

Examples I've experienced include:

- Delivery time of one week but after reducing offerings it became 1 day and blitzed the competition;
- Quality was average and the business was competing with the masses with low margins, but with a narrower focus, quality increased and so did the margins and they were able to sell less but make more \$.
- A narrower focus resulted in better service which generated happier clients - in fact the business was now able to 'wow' the clients and that created huge free word of mouth promotion. Imagine how much more enjoyable that was for the business owner and it reduced their marketing costs and time spent cold calling and 'begging'.

In my experience we are a species that likes to add complexity to things. The result is a lot of unnecessary stress and worry in business. If you are looking to try something new, experiment with some internal reflection and analysis and see what you can REDUCE rather than ADD.

Are You Asking Your Customer to Marry You on the First Date?

I often hear from a client that they did a Facebook campaign for a week, letterbox drop or email offer and shock horror, didn't get a sale. Or even an enquiry.



Don't expect your clients to agree to marriage on your first date.

It can take between 7 to 15 contacts with you before someone actually buys from you.

What could you do to build the relationship over several smaller 'dates' and help them get to know you?

The 7-date contact plan

If they don't know you, the content should be useful and informing. Then build on this with each 'date' you have with them. Provide progressively more info that helps them get to know who you are and gives them confidence. For example, use testimonials and examples of other projects or clients. Remember it can take 7 or more dates before they buy.

Start with a kiss

My local café bar in Melbourne makes the most amazing savoury muffins each morning in a variety of versions such as egg on top with bacon wrap, or chorizo sausage and pumpkin. Mouthwatering! They are on the counter, cheap and easy to eat, and no one else has them. The first kiss. I started stopping by just to get one then my dates with them progressed to lunch and now dinner.

Rescue a bad date

I was hired as a business development manager for a national company to help win back major customers that had left due to poor service. They were reluctant to try us again no matter how much I told them we had changed. So I offered them use of our spare space. They needed space and we had space. It meant they had staff in our building seeing us work and getting to know us. This built trust, and not long after we had the chance to tender for major contracts again.

If you need to rescue a bad date, it is very important you demonstrate in some way that you have fixed the problem. Talk is cheap. Give them tangible evidence you have new processes, new training, new staff, new products, whatever.

Just as the 'Start with a Kiss' suggestion. Just get them started with something small that is minimal risk to them. Research shows that if you can get them to use you three times, you will have won them over.

May you...live happily ever after with your customers...

Simple Tool to Improve the Effectiveness of Your Website and Brochures

How we describe our product or service is very much like putting it in a 'box'.

The words we use to describe it to someone that can't see it or haven't experienced it yet, is a form of 'packaging'. Our words are the 'packaging' that the customer can see and create an opinion on.

With this in mind...would you intentionally put your product/service in a grubby worn out box?



"Are your emails, flyers and website text like this box??!"

Every week I get the equivalent of tatty, grubby, uninviting boxes delivered via emails, flyers or websites that do anything but make me jump for joy and rush to open them.

The common reason for this is that we write our sales emails, flyers or websites from our point of view and not our customers.

The result? We list features rather than *benefits*.

We HIDE our great product/service in a crappy box that we then enthusiastically shove in the face of a potential customer and expect them to get excited and buy it!

Here's a great little strategy I've developed to help solve this problem.

Take your text and draw **boxes** around features or facts or an action you are proposing.

It is especially important to do this for your first and last sentences! That is what we tend to read and remember.

Then ask yourself, 'can I unpack these boxes?'

For example, read these feature statements and see how the boxes can be unpacked:

"For just **\$3,579** we will provide you with **12 widgets**"

"You can save \$1,569 and we will a whole year's supply of widgets."

We can unpack the boxes so they describe benefits. Instead of telling our prospect they need to spend money, we can point out they will save money.

And are '12 widgets' something to get excited about? I don't know, not a very big number, but when I realise it's a whole years supply, that sounds huge!

"You can save \$1,569 and we will provide you with a whole year's supply of widgets."

Another example...

"Could we make a time to explain in more detail about what we offer?"



"What we offer" isn't very compelling and reason enough to give up my time for a meeting. Unpack the box and describe benefits...eg. "...how other companies are using our system to reduce product recalls by 96%" "how we can increase revenue by 300% in 3 months?"

Have a go. Pick out some paragraphs on your website or brochure and draw boxes around features. Then see how you can unpack those boxes and turn them into benefits.

Marketing is the LAST Thing You Need!!

Would you consider it smart business practice to invest in a marketing campaign that promotes a product that actually loses you money?

Or a product that delivers 150% less profit than one of your other products and ties up staff time?

I've been there and done that and I've helped many clients stop doing this. It's a common problem.

I joined a large national company as their Business Development Manager and reviewed their product pricing and their favourite product they were pushing was COSTING them \$37 for each sale. A major contributing factor to their \$100K/mo loss. We quickly fixed that.

One of my recent clients went from \$50K/mo to \$150K/mo, after we looked through what was their real money spinner products. They were promoting a service that delivered significantly less than their other services and were telling me they wanted a marketing campaign to sell more of it. The solution was simple, just a matter of making some phone calls, changing some promo blurbs and phone scripts and the rest is history.

Marketing is ESSENTIAL. If you don't have a marketing campaign it's like building a great car with all the bells and whistles but leaving it in the factory.



BUT before you plan and roll out your marketing plan, KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY SHOULD BE SELLING!!!!

The following infographic summarises my recommended strategy and thought process. Next time you are planning a campaign, review the infographic.

NEED MORE SALES?

TROUBLESHOOTING FLOWCHART

1ST CHECK: SALES...OR PROFIT?

Do you really want more 'sales' or money in your hand, ie profit?

1. PROFIT

Check your profit margins in order to determine:

- Which products/services are the most profitable?
- Which products/services to cut? Which to sell.
- New pricing or packages required?

2. MORE SALES

Diagnostic across Product, Pricing, Promotion and People to see where the brakes are on sales

EXISTING...

4. NETWORKS

Explore ways to leverage your existing customer networks, contacts, groups, databases, friends, family

3. CUSTOMERS

ALWAYS look for ways to sell more to existing customers before spending time and money getting new ones.

- Increase price
- Upsell
- Increase repeat business
- Increase referrals

5. LEADS

Convert more of your existing leads into sales

7. NEW STRATEGY

Develop a fresh new campaign based on ideal customer profiles, sales target, new packages, new pricing

6. NEW CUSTOMERS

NOW you can spend time and money on winning new customers.

- What worked in the past? Repeat, tweak.
- What didn't work? Analyse POTL - product, offer, timing, location, tweak, repeat?
- Ideal customer that will pay your prices?

How to Write a Winning Email

People don't spend enough time getting them right so they grab attention, promote benefits and have a call to action. Move them from 'ordinary' to 'lucrative' with the following tips.

- ❑ Grab attention via the title - 80% of people will only read your title, make sure you include a catchy title that makes them open the email. For example it might be a question, controversial, provocative or combo of both. "Are you about to go bankrupt?"
- ❑ Spend half your time on the email content and half on the title.
- ❑ Use bullets in your email to make it easy to see the key messages or benefits you are offering.
- ❑ Structure your email message so it's showing how you will help your customer move away from pain and towards pleasure. Always cover both. Show how you will help them avoid pain. Show them how you will help them experience pleasure.
- ❑ ALWAYS use a 'ps' at the bottom. Second highest read part of the email! Use it for a call to action, deadline reminder, special offer.

Google Adwords Can Help You Uncover New Markets

If you are not aware, Adwords are the ads that pop up on the right or top of your screen when browsing. Very versatile and easy to setup.

But they are more than just as a lead generation tool. Here are a couple uses I find them very handy for:

- Use them for testing what your customers want the most. For example you can run ads for different products (or services) simultaneously to see which one gets the most clicks. A great way to confirm you are marketing the right products/services. You can even use them to test demand for a product/service you are thinking about providing.
- Use them to test which suburb, city or country has the biggest demand for your product or service. Great for planning expansion, finding new markets or confirming where you should open another office.

I find running the ads for two weeks can be enough to gauge interest. Certainly run them longer if you can.

Tip: when assessing which ad is getting the most clicks, make sure you check the number of times it was shown, ie the 'Impressions' and CTR - click through rate. It's easy to find in your adword dashboard.

CTR is a measure of the number of times the ad was shown (impressions) in order to generate a click. For example you may have an ad that has received 20 clicks and another ad 16. This doesn't mean the 20 click ad is the most popular. It may have been shown 4000 times which equates to a CTR of 0.5% = 1 click for every 200 impressions. The 16 click ad may have been shown 1600 times which equates to .

Google has easy to watch and understand tutorial videos on how to setup an adwords account if you don't know how and they offer free advice.

Tell Them They Probably Don't Need It...

Here's a strategy I love to use that gets the customer arguing the case for why they should buy my product/service rather than me having to try to convince them.

Not suitable for all situations but one area I find it very effective is when testing market demand for a new product or service with customers. It has opened a lot of doors for my businesses over the years.

Situation: you need to confirm demand and key features that a new product or service requires in terms of presentation, delivery, pricing and functionality.

Action: start with your top customers that you have a good relationship with and that might want it. Rather than try to 'sell' the new product/service, start a casual dialogue asking their opinion or advice on this new product/service that has XYZ benefits.

Sample script goes something like this...

"Hi Jim, have I got you at a good time or bad time?"

"No, it's a good time"

"Great, I wanted a quick chat to get your opinion on a new service we are thinking of offering. {not selling anything, just asking advice so pressure and guard is immediately dropped}. Several customers have been asking for it {establish the fact its wanted by others = cred, desire not to miss out} and it may be a crazy idea or not of benefit to you guys, but it is...XYZ and provides XYZ benefits. What do you think, and feel free to say the idea sucks!"

"Well actually that could be really useful...especially if it came with ABC. Would it come with that?"

"Hey great idea, yes, we could include that actually. What benefits exactly would that provide you?"

And on it goes, they start telling you the reasons they need it. They provide valuable insight to the benefits or features it must have.

Now of course some people will agree with you and tell you it sucks but that is important to know as well. Maybe the idea does suck. Better to find out sooner rather than later and spending dollars and time going down a dead end.

If they do like it, like my mate Jim above did, you are in a great position then to close the deal and explore how and when they would like to try it - and it might first be a prototype or special price.

Make an Extra 20% Profit Without Increasing Sales

20%

How? By making sure you are charging enough and selling more of your most profitable products or services.

Common mistakes are not knowing your real profit margins and not including the cost of running your business in your pricing.

Insufficient mark-up

I've seen many businesses pushing sales of products that are actually break-even or losing them money. They strive for more profit and assume they need to sell more product so spend time and money on marketing - yet still don't see any extra dollars in their hand.



More than once I've seen business clients gain 20% in profit by simply spending an hour working out exactly what their different services cost them.

In one case, a package deal was taking up a lot of staff time but only generating \$4 profit per customer. The business needed \$32. The package was cancelled and marketing shifted to a profitable package. No need to pump money into more advertising or cold calling.

Make sure you know your margins! And be realistic - don't go low.

Tip: Don't forget to factor in the time it takes to answer questions, conduct site visits, process payments, pack and ship etc and cost of all materials, marketing, running your operation. Your accountant can help you.

It takes time and money to secure customers. Don't waste it.

Overheads

A second common mistake is forgetting to include business overheads in pricing. There are fixed and variable costs you have to pay each year to be in business and deliver your product. For example rent, admin, accountants, electricity, insurance, vehicles, supplies, cleaning, laundry, equipment, staff and your salary.

Tip: Don't forget to include your own salary in your total operating expenses! I see sole traders and micro businesses not factoring in their wage. The result is everyone else gets paid except them!

Are you spreading a portion of this overhead across all your products? If not, you could be losing significant amounts of money.

Maximise Profits Before and During the Festive Season

September is the time to start preparing and putting in place strategies to maximise profits and wins during and after the Christmas period. We all know how fast time is eaten up leading up to the silly season. Here are some suggestions to consider for your business.



Start marketing early!

Marketing campaigns typically require time to generate returns so if you haven't started your campaign by October or even planned it, GET CRACKING!

Don't forget to factor in the time required to put new campaigns together. Even simple ads require some time to think them through, selection of graphics and wording, custom graphics or pics, print and delivery etc.

Starting early also gives you time to test ideas and see what offer gets the highest response, or no response!

Encourage your customers to spend

Can you help your customers spend a bit more leading up to Xmas?

Not being funny here. Leading up to Christmas is a good time to talk to your top customers and ask them if there are any priority projects or purchases you can help them with now so they are in a better position to start the new year, and what can you do to help them get approval or confirm the sale. You may not get an immediate 'yes' but you've placed the idea in their head.

Remember to focus on the benefits to them, not you, ie the **benefits** of getting things sorted now, rather than at the last minute in December and the **benefits** of coming back to work after the holidays with XYZ in place. In some cases it's worth offering a financial incentive to buy now and that is the benefit to them.

Offer your customers something to make their quiet January catch-up time productive

Some customers will use the quieter January period to catch up on things that they have trouble getting to when its business as usual. So...is there something you can help them with during this quieter time that will make their life easier (and yours)?

Can you suggest something they should prepare or purchase and install during this period? Sow the seed in their mind and you often find they will come back to you and take you up on the suggestion.

Use the quieter period to work ON your business

Since January can be quieter, what can you work on yourself for your own business to put you in a better position to really kick into gear in the New Year?

It can be a good time to write your list of blogs or articles, or case studies or other marketing materials. Imagine how that will feel to have them done, out of the way and no longer taking up head space which will allow you to think clearer about other priority tasks.

Revamp your website or build a total new one. Remember, marketing efforts and web building can easily take a few months to complete when you factor in the time to decide what to do, write the material, confirm a provider, get it done - so best to start now and schedule them in!

Get creative

One of my favourite strategies for the end of the year or the quieter periods at the start of a new year is a relaxed brain storming session with your staff on what can be done better to improve efficiencies and customer satisfaction.

Remember, increasing profit is NOT just about selling more widgets. Improving efficiencies is often overlooked and can be equally as profitable, and far easier than finding more customers to buy widgets.

What can you add to your service that will give your business the 'WOW!' factor that people feel compelled to mention on Facebook or tell their friends?

What new opportunities can you pursue? Schedule a brainstorming session before Xmas, as part of the end of year celebrations or as a fun get together when everyone comes back from holidays.

DONE?	HAVE YOU...?	PRIORITY? H, M, L
	Planned, designed and ordered your Xmas marketing materials or ads?	
	Brainstormed Xmas specials or packages you can offer?	
	Thought of gift ideas to trigger more buying?	
	<p>Planned end of year (or new year) customer reviews to find out how well you are doing, what you can do better or what they would like you to offer?</p> <p>This is gold. And don't forget to ask how much work they have for you in the new year. This can be done via online surveys, phone calls, face to face lunch or coffee chats. If you get some negative feedback, accept it, don't start arguing and defending yourself.</p>	
	Planned staff interviews to check-in and see how they are travelling, are they moving towards their goals, what they would like to be doing next year, and what improvements they suggest for the business?	
	Planned cards and hampers for clients? It's a time to just give. Don't include any sales speak or offers in your gift...otherwise it's not a gift!	
	Planned cards and hampers, bonuses etc for staff?	
	Put sufficient money aside to cover a slowdown in Jan? This can make your Xmas hols a lot more enjoyable if you aren't stressing about bills.	
	Scheduled a business review during the quiet time to reflect on the past year and goals and what to do better this new year? When it	

	comes to goals, make sure you are focusing on lead measures and not lag measures. For example if you focus on increasing revenue by 10%, that is a lag measure.	
	Scheduled a review of profit margins and material costs and if you can get better pricing from suppliers? And it's not just pricing...you can ask for better terms, or one of my clients asked for new carpet in one of his offices and got it. So think outside the square.	

NOTES:

3. Mental Game of Business

To Succeed in Business, Get Comfortable Feeling Uncomfortable

Scared to act? To make that call or presentation? To really state how great your service is? To take on a new venture? To expand into a new market? Try a new marketing initiative?

As business owners - and as human beings, we are presented with challenges on a daily basis. Uncomfortable times are as guaranteed as taxes.

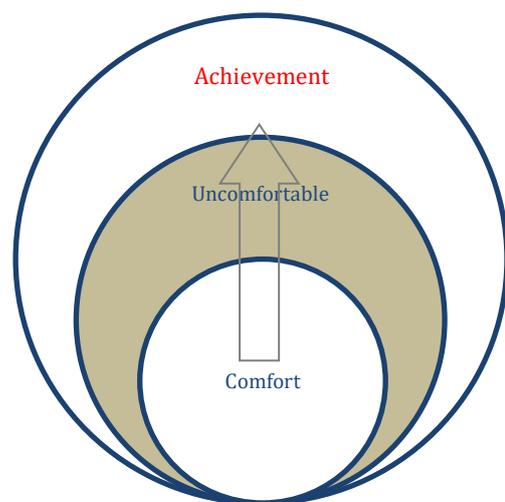


Learn to be *comfortable* feeling *uncomfortable*.

As Glen Carlson, co-founder of the Key Person of Influence program, explains it...if you think about every achievement you have ever had in life, they are ALL preceded by one thing...a period of uncomfortableness. A period where you were working hard, moving outside of your comfort zone, and feeling pangs of fear. No achievement happens without this uncomfortable period.

I think we can lean too heavily on trying to REMOVE that uncomfortable feeling.

Quite natural. When we don't like something, we look to get rid of it somewhere.



So what to do about it? How can you feel more comfortable?

I've borrowed from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), made popular by Dr Russ Harris and his books such as 'The Happiness Trap' and 'The Reality Slap'.

DON'T TRY TO GET RID OF THE FEAR!

DON'T!

Counter intuitive but instead of fighting it, accept it.

When we come from the position of needing to get rid of something, we set ourselves up for failure because invariably we can't make the fear magically disappear, it's still there and we perpetuate its power and hold over us and reinforce the feeling we are powerless. And so we give in to it and don't act. And our business can suffer.

Succeeding in business has challenging moments and fearful moments.

Unavoidable...but not something to fear. By accepting this and accepting we are feeling fearful we can diffuse its power.

It's quite a liberating experience to sit quietly with your fear and not suppress it. Sit with it, feel it, give it a colour, a shape even.

But don't try to get rid of it. Just sit with it. Accept it in a non-judgemental way. Just observe it as you would a picture, a statue a garden.

Notice what happens to it. In many cases it calms down and becomes less fearful. Keep this feeling and become familiar with it. It is strengthening your action muscle to act even when feeling fear. As business owners we need to act and need to act quickly and we become more effective and successful when we can act even with fear inside us. I guess you could say this technique helps us become immune to that feeling of fear. Fighting it does the opposite.

You can go a step further and visualise expanding the space around the fear you have visualised so that you see how small it actually is in the scheme of things.

When you zoom out and look at it from the bigger picture of your life, your business, next year, your suburb, your country...it's very, very small.

So small that you don't need to hide it or bury it somewhere or banish it...there is oodles of room for it in your life and it can sit there as long as it likes but it's not going to hold you back or slow you down from doing what you need to do in your business.

Trick Your Brain Into Success

Use these 3 powerful strategies to trick your brain into helping you succeed by unlocking the solutions it has hidden. And they will start rewiring your brain to connect to answers rather than blocks. Within a month you will notice a significant difference in your mood and speed of thought and solutions.

Our brains are like the internet. Our language is like the search terms we enter. If we Google "how to...?" we get all kinds of random 'how to' suggestions.

If we use more accurate and specific search terms, eg "how to make chocolate cake" we get the answers we are looking for. No brainer! :) Our brains may be complex and amazing but they are actually quite simple to operate...once we know how.

Trick 1: Ask how, not if

Instead of saying "I can't afford it", rephrase it with "How can I afford it?" Or "How can we afford it?"

I learnt this technique 16 years ago when starting my property investing and in three years I went from regularly saying "I can't afford it" to finding ways to successfully invest in property in WA, Qld and VIC.

When you say "how can I afford it?" your brain gets on task and works to help you see ways you CAN afford it. Saying you 'can't afford it' can only cause your brain to do one thing and that is confirm how you can't. Apply this technique in business when faced with an expense whether it's hiring, marketing, new equipment, training, whatever.

Trick 2: Just add 'yet'

"I don't know" versus "I don't know...yet".

Repeat each one and note how you feel after saying it. Can you feel the difference?

First one shuts down solutions and is a dead-end. Second one triggers the brain to unlock hidden knowledge.

Trick 3: Reword your thoughts

"I'm confused" versus "I'm seeking clarification"

First one reinforces an unhelpful state that is a dead-end. Reinforces what state of mind? Confusion!

Encourage staff to use 'I'm seeking clarification' or the equivalent. Whether it's in meetings, daily activities or conversation.

Secrets to Better Goal Setting

Ho-hum, another article on goal setting? There are lots of good posts on 'how to set goals'...but WHY DO WE KEEP BREAKING THEM??!!

That's what I wanted to know. So I interviewed Associate Professor Nicole Lee, internationally recognised for her research and training in motivating people to stop using drugs.

Nicole gave me some great little secrets that I haven't seen mentioned or discussed much that I think you will find very useful if you are in a goal setting mood (or they may help you get into a goal setting mood).

Here's my shortcut to the secrets and we made a video for you too:

<http://youtu.be/JkRpXM8srOY>

Our motivation to achieve the goal is bigger than our motivation to actually do the work to achieve it

Makes perfect sense! We can get excited about the benefits of achieving a goal but forget to fully appreciate the work involved to get to it. Therefore when the going gets tough, we stop.

Solution? Break your goal down into bite size chunks. Work with your business partner, team or coach to confirm all the steps and set those as mini goals.

Don't give up when you slip up!

Apparently the technical term is the 'change violation effect'. We fall off the wagon, miss a target, lapse back into a negative habit and as a result, give up on the goal, take it as confirmation we can't achieve it and no longer pursue it. *'Stuff it, no point continuing'*.

We need to acknowledge that change isn't easy and we are human and there will be lapses.

We should not throw the baby out with the bath water.

For example smokers take 3-7 attempts to stop smoking according to the research. Changing our behaviour is like exercising a muscle and new exercise or increased exercise can feel hard, even impossible. Solution?

First and foremost don't quit just because of a slip up. Just get back into it and keep going.

Second, think of each slip up as a lesson. Why did it happen? What can you do to prevent it from happening again? What strategy can you have ready if you feel it's happening again? All of these are things you can work with your coach on.

Thirdly, look at whether you need to break the goal down into smaller goals and build more gradually on them.

Support and accountability

Very important you have someone you trust and respect to help keep you accountable and support you when you slip up. This can be your coach for example.

Having support and someone keeping you focused will double or triple your success rate in hitting goals.

Reward yourself

To maintain long term motivation you need to reward yourself and your team on the journey towards the goal.

If you have set smaller goals along the way, make sure you acknowledge hitting those. Doesn't have to be anything expensive or elaborate and can just be positive words, but make sure you do acknowledge progress made.

Goals must align with your core values

Another reason we can lose motivation and stop pursuing a goal is the fact that deep down it was never aligned to our core values.

Look at your goal and think about whether it is truly aligned with your business ethics, integrity, your vision for the business?

Your vision and mission statements if written correctly will basically articulate your core values and are great tools for testing your goals against (and your marketing material and your branding and even new hires). Will the goal take you towards your vision or away from it?

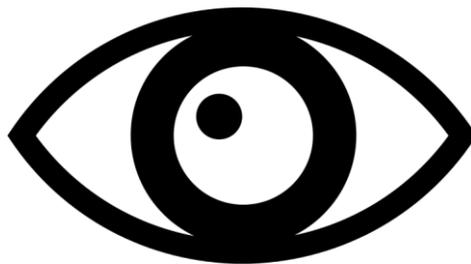
What about your own core values? Are you setting the goal for you or is it really a goal triggered by peer pressure or expectations of others?

Visualisation *not* Affirmations are the Secret

Are affirmations to think positive or get yourself motivated not working? Never really worked for me either. The secret is *visualisation*.

And not really surprising considering research shows that the brain can't distinguish between an imagined event and real event and still changes body chemistry accordingly.

I think it's one of the best kept secrets. Might do the trick for you as well.



For example, if you need to get yourself into a positive mindset to tackle a business task, simply spend a minute or two bringing up a memory of a time when you were super motivated. A time that you were on fire and raring to go. Spend as long with that memory as you need. You will find your mood immediately changes.

Visualisation can be used for any mindset - confident speaker/trainer, loving partner, focused and productive, or confident and positive seller.

Are You the Adult, Parent, or Child in Your Business?

We tend to play one of three roles in our business (and in relationships and parenting): Adult, Parent or Child. They are known as ego-states. This is based on Dr Eric Berne's seminal theory from the 1950's - and is very useful for us business owners looking to improve as business managers and our staff performance, productivity, and profits.

This is the first in 'Your Inner Game Series' to help you improve results in 2016 by improving the way you think which in turn improves the actions you take in your business. It's not circumstances that will dictate your success in 2016, it's your actions.

Adult

- ✓ In the adult role we take **100% responsibility** and **accountability** for results.
- ✓ Reactions are based on **facts** and **logic**.
- ✓ We don't blame others or pass the buck.
- ✓ We manage our emotions.
- ✓ We handle criticism and negative feedback because we accept it for what it is, **feedback**, and we don't turn it into a personal wound.

We recognise we are responsible for the current situation or state of the business and as an adult we can fix it. We don't hesitate to look at what we can do better next time. When dealing with staff we treat them with respect and trust and don't play games.

The adult controls the parent and the child. To change the parent or child, we must go through the adult.

Parent



As a parent, we believe we know best and we treat staff and others as our 'kids' that can't be trusted, need to be constantly told what to do or to be nurtured.

We respond to situations in the way we have 'learnt' to from our parents therefore our reactions are not always based on logic and the facts.

We may not delegate well. It's 'our way or the highway'. As a parent we can tend to want to rescue staff, protect them, and if they don't do it right or at all, we get annoyed and tend to jump in and 'just do it ourselves'.



We may hinder staff growth and their ability to work as adults. We don't hold them accountable and responsible.

Child



As a child we just want to have fun and avoid responsibility.

When the shit hits the fan, we say "it wasn't me!" "It's their fault". "It's the market" or the competitors, or the supplier, or the boss, or....

We find all sorts of excuses for poor results or not doing something. But when things are good, we take all the credit. We constantly seek and need pats on the back for doing a good job, in other words we seek approval of 'parents'.

We just want to play and as a business owner this can mean just wanting to spend the income without proper attention to taxes and other financial responsibilities or keeping the marketing going.

If we deal with someone playing a parent role and telling us what to do, we can feel offended, resentful, and become obstinate and not follow orders or quietly sabotage the person.

What does it mean for your business?

Next time you are in a less than positive situation, or if you have a current issue, explore which role you are playing - parent, adult or child.

Don't worry about what role the others were playing. Be an adult and take full responsibility for a few minutes and explore YOUR role.

For example, if there were instances where you were being a parent or a child, what were they? How would you have behaved differently as an adult?

White down what you will do differently next time similar situations occur. Explore how can you move forward as an adult.

Mindfulness of how you are acting in your business is one of the keys to success.

Being mindful that the outcome is only a product of 2 things: an event and your reaction.

Event + Your Reaction (as an adult, parent, child) = Your Outcome

Recognising whether you are being a parent, adult or child significantly helps you modify your 'reaction'. Which unquestionably influences the 'outcome'.

Number 1 Mistake Small Businesses Make with Pricing

Are you working hard in your business but seeing little money in your pocket? Are you feeling you are paying everyone else except yourself?

One of the biggest budgeting mistakes small business owners make is not including their own salary in operating expenses. When working out how much you need to charge, you MUST include your salary!

As a result they are working hard just to pay everyone else including suppliers - and in many cases earning less than they would in a job with far less responsibility and hassle!

First, let me ask you a deep and meaningful question....if you are NOT paying yourself a 'proper' salary and have NOT included your salary in operating costs...why not?

- Do you have a subconscious or conscious belief that you don't deserve to be paid?
- Do you believe you should be paid last?
- Do you need to look after everyone else first and then yourself?
- Or deep down do you feel you can't achieve a higher salary?

Our businesses are an extension of ourselves and how we think. If you have even a hint of self doubt about paying yourself, you need to explore this further because your business will only grow as much as you feel you deserve! You cannot have the cash in your hand until you honestly own it in your head and heart.

To have what you haven't had before, you have to think differently!

STEP 1: Decide how much you need

Decide how much you need this year - this can be reduced slightly if the business is under three years old but showing steady growth, or you consistently have profit each year. You should be earning at least twice what you can in an equivalent job.

STEP 2: Include your salary in your budgeting

Take your monthly wage and include it in your total monthly operating costs that you need to cover. Then spread your total monthly costs over however many products or services you sell each month, on average. This gives you a dollar value you need to charge. Monthly

variations in sales? That is quite normal so average it out across a whole year. The peak months must make up for the slow months.

STEP 3: Check pricing

If you add your salary and feel your prices are now too high, you have some further work to do and questions to ask - see Step 4. If prices seem ok, then great, you are now in a better position to ensure you get paid as well as everyone else each month.

STEP 4: Review

If your prices now seem too high, what information are you basing this on? Be careful you are not underselling yourself. Re-read the Red Flag Warning! :)

Are selling the most profitable products/services? Often businesses are selling what easily sells but the products are not profitable. Do you know your profit margin, the true cost to deliver each of your products? This can be a real wake up call.

You must work out the true cost to promote, produce, deliver and service each of the products or services you sell. Otherwise you could be busting your butt to sell 100 of Widget C that gives you \$20 profit each instead of selling only 20 Widget A's that gives you \$100 each and far less work.

Now, assuming you can't increase your prices, the next action is to explore if you can reduce your overheads somehow? Can you increase efficiency?

Assuming prices can't increase and overheads and efficiency are about as good as it gets, then how many widgets do you need to sell to provide your required salary? What will it take for you to sell this many?

Adding in your salary to overheads can be a healthy kick up the arse to change what you focus on selling, and/or change your pricing packages. And it can solve the mystery of why you are not seeing dollars in your pocket each month.

If you can't sell enough or charge enough, you probably have a hobby and not a business.

4. General Business Tips

Don't Flog a Dead Horse!

Are you chasing your business dream but feeling like you are treading water, spinning your wheels? You could be flogging a dead horse.



Don't quit? Rubbish! The most successful entrepreneurs quit fast and cheap and without guilt. They move on quickly when they hit a dry gully. It is known in the game as 'pivoting'. But how do you know when that horse has died?

1. You've been at it for three or more years and you are still not profitable.

Businesses, like farming, take time. You need to plant the seeds of your business, nurture your customer base, and grow the best mix of products. There seems to be a magic three year mark regardless of the industry. At this point, you should really be starting to see a steady inflow of customers. If you are struggling, something is wrong and it could be terminal, especially if it will require more financial resources than you have available to keep going, or new technology has made your offer obsolete or too expensive.

2. You are getting little or no repeat business.

If your customers are not coming back for more, something is wrong. You need to be creating raving fans that keep coming back and are telling their friends about you.

3. You have lost your mojo.

If going to work each day does not excite you, or you are procrastinating on important tasks, listen to your gut feeling. If everyday feels too hard, or your health or family life is suffering,

something is wrong. Even amongst the hard work of business, you should feel a sense of excitement or achievement.

If this sounds like you and your business, then it is time to check your horse's pulse. It is time to get some objective professional help to assess your business and help you decide whether it is a dead horse.

A business coach or mentor can help you assess whether there is sufficient demand for your product or service, if your marketing is effective or needs changing, and whether credibility and background is an issue.

Remember: it is not a sign of failure to quit while you are still ahead; it is a sign of a seasoned entrepreneur who knows when to cut their losses and move on to the next challenge. And quitting doesn't mean your dream is over! Getting off a dead horse frees up your time, money and creative energy so that you can apply it to a business that *will* deliver your dream.

Quick Tips for Online Pricing

From Graham Jones, The Internet Psychologist

- End the price in a 7 seems to create more sales. \$199 is not as good as \$197
- Odd numbers feel smaller than even numbers because we view odd numbers as descending, whereas even numbers feel as though they are going up
- Put your discounted price in MUCH BIGGER font than the original price to increase the size of the discount in the mind of the reader

~~\$229~~ now \$197!

Eleven Mistakes Startups Make

As stated by Guy Kawasaki, Silicon Valley venture capitalist, author, marketing expert, ex Apple evangelist, chief evangelist for Canva and others.

Multiplying big numbers by 1%

'There are two fundamental flaws with this:

- Getting 1% of any market is not that easy
- No investors want to hear that you're only going to get 1% (which sort of contradicts point above)'

Scaling too soon

'I have never seen a company die because it didn't scale fast enough. Usually what happens is you scale too fast in anticipation of a conservative 1% with the programs created by your rock star engineering staff, it doesn't come through. You're stuck with big overhead and you run out of money.'

Partnering

For Guy Kawasaki, "partnering is bullshit."

'There's only one thing that counts in a start-up - its sales. Partnering means two organisations try to compensate for their weaknesses by partnering with another:

2 + 2 = 3 in this case.

Partnerships mean nothing. Start-ups should focus on sales. Sales fix everything.'

Pitching instead of prototyping

A lot of entrepreneurs are focusing on the pitching process. In the real world the key is not the pitch.

'If someone gave me a choice of having a team come in with a great PowerPoint pitch or come in with a prototype that is working, I would pick the working prototype all day long.

Because in a few hours I could help most of you fix your pitch, I cannot, in a few hours, help anybody fix their prototype. Prototyping is the key.'

Using too many slides and too small a font

If you are going to pitch, use the *Guy Kawasaki 10-20 rule of PowerPoint*. The optimal number of slides on a PowerPoint presentation is 10.

The time you should be able to get those slides in is 20 minutes. Thus 10-20 rule. Ideal font size is 30pt or larger. This prevents you from putting too much detail and taking too long. So in summary, remember the 10-20-30 rule.

Doing things serially

Entrepreneurs believe they should do things serially which is to do things one at a time.

The serial world in entrepreneurship doesn't exist.

'Unfair as it may seem, if you are an entrepreneur, you are going to have to be raising money, writing software, prototyping, selling, recruiting, and collecting money ALL at the SAME TIME. It is all those paths moving down the road all at the same time. It is not a serial process.'

Believing 51% = control

Many, many entrepreneurs believe that as long as they and their buddies own 51 % of the company, they are in total control of the company. Because they believe that in board meetings, things come down to a vote and 51% wins.

'I have never seen anything come down to a vote in a board meeting. It's either everybody wants to do it or nobody wants to do it. The truth is, the moment you take outside money, you have lost control of the company. When you take outside money, you have a moral, ethical, and financial obligation to the outside money. If you cannot deal with that, then don't take outside money.'

Believing Patents = defensibility

The ideal number of times you should use the P world in your presentation is once.

"We have filed patents" – that's it.

'If you say "*We have filed patents and it is going to create a defensible position for us*" that's two and you're wrong. You are deluding yourself if you believe that patenting something will make you defensible. Because it takes about 5-6 years to file a patent and get it done.

Don't tell a sophisticated investor that the reason why you are defensible is because you filed a patent. In fact, that's a very good test – if, when you say you filed a patent and the investor laughs and rolls his/her eyes, that is a smart investor. If the investor agrees to the idea of filling a patent, walk out of that room, that person is an idiot.'

Hiring in your own image

If you're an engineering person, you need to balance out your engineering prowess. So an engineering person should hire a sales person. A sales person should hire an engineering person.

'Many times companies like to all hire the same kind of people. And when that happens, you'll have glaring weaknesses.'

'You need to hire people who compliment your skills. Fundamentally for start-ups, what you need is someone to *make it*, someone to *sell it*, someone to *collect it*. Remember you need all three skills: make it, sell it, and collect it.'

Befriending your VCs (Venture Capitals)

'VCs and investors are not your friends. I'm not saying you should hate them. But I am saying that it is a business. They are in the business of making money; they're not in the business of making friends. Angel investors' maybe, but VCs are not.

The key to managing your VCs or investors is to just meet your projections. Guy's advice is that you set projections that you are 80% confident you'll make. 80% is the minimum confidence you should have. You need to under-promise and over-deliver.

'What happens if a realistic projection doesn't make the company interesting enough to get funded? That's the real problem and I will tell you that VC is not for everybody. VC is playing a game. Every VC wants to find the next Google.'

Thinking VCs can add value

'You shouldn't think that VCs are going to do a lot of heavy lifting. Fundamentally what you want from a VC is money and you want 2-3 hours a month of their bandwidth. That's about it.

The irony is that the more successful you are the more bandwidth you'll get. Which is kind of unfortunate because the led successful you are, the more you might have needed the help. The VC game is a game of hindsight. Have a realistic expectation of venture capitalists. It's a mistake many entrepreneurs make.'

Don't Make These Mistakes Supplying Retail Outlets!

Are you a start-up or small business supplying products to retail outlets, and frustrated with poor sales?

Here's a few possible reasons and some strategies around them.

The retail outlet just doesn't know enough about *you* and your *product*.

When I suggest this to a business owner, they often reply, "Oh yes they do. We sent them complete product info packs and have been in personally to educate staff on our products".

As a business owner, it is helpful to remember that your products are the centre of *your* universe, BUT your retailers have 100's of products in the centre of their universe. Never ever...ever assume they know enough about your product.

Note: First check your product is properly displayed and the retail outlet is happy with how it's packaged. Poor placement or packaging might be the culprit!

Do some secret shopping. You can get a friend, colleague or myself to call or conduct an actual visit to the shop, and ask if they have an XYZ that they can recommend. Then the fun begins! If they recommend a competitor product I quiz them on why they recommended it (and this is gold and very important to remember) and then I'll say, "what about this one?" and pick up my clients product and wait to hear what they say about it.

This is the really useful part of the exercise. I love to hear what they say about my client's product. It's not uncommon for the staff to:

1. Not know enough about your product and why it is better than a competitor product, especially one that might be cheaper.
2. They don't know you or your story and therefore it is just a 'product' whereas your competitor may be well known to them, they have met them and they like their 'story'.
3. Your product has a flaw, a weakness that is killing it and it will never sell well. Better you know sooner than later and fix it or dump it!

What can you do?

If they don't know enough about your product, ask them if infosheets, handouts or personal instruction would work best to help staff.

I highly recommend FIRST talking to them to see what type of info they need and in what format they prefer. Don't waste time and money producing something and then taking it to them.

For example they may want a one-pager summarising key benefits and your story. Don't give them more than one page unless they specifically request it. For one of my clients, we made laminated one page info-sheets that were attached to his displays and they worked very well.

It is super important that you note the *benefits* they tell you or don't tell you about your product and your competitors products. Use this knowledge to decide what to include in any info you give them. And if you know a key benefit they don't realise or know about, make sure you tell them!

There is a lot of misinformation out there. I've had competitors tell retailers complete lies about a client's product, for example it doesn't last or doesn't meet a certain standard or can't be used in certain situations. All completely false but staff believed it to be true and wouldn't sell the products – so beware. You want to be able to counter or beat or at least equal the benefits of your competitor products.

Caution! It is not uncommon to become complacent with our own products. We become insensitive, over exposed to them. We may overlook a benefit as being too small to mention.

However customers, or at least some might consider this benefit a reason to select the product! Better to mention the benefit than leave it out.

Be ready to offer info to attach near your product or with it. They may want brochures/handouts to give customers interested and it's cheap these days to provide an in-store ipad/tablet with video demonstrating key features and how it works. But again, before you spend time and money doing this, check with the store first to confirm if necessary, how big, how many etc.

And staff change! So be prepared to do this every 6mo or more frequently.

Your Story

If they don't know your story, get in the store and put a face to a name and share your passion for the product and how it came to be, and the care, passion and quality that goes into making it.

It's the squeaky wheel that gets the oil. If you bother to take time out of your day to visit them, they will feel you care about them, and they will care about your product. It will raise your product in their memory...providing you can make a good impression! Let's be honest here. If you are not an extrovert people person that presents a suitable image, this task may not be the thing for you to do in person. Go with your strengths and recognise your weaknesses and find ways around them.

Updates

Give the store updates with any good news about the product, alternative uses for it, tips on how to use it, and especially how popular it is. We all gravitate to 'popular' items the masses trust - make sure they know it's popular and selling well and loved by others! Assuming it is...

Your product has faults?

And if they are honest and admit it has flaws, weaknesses that are really preventing it from selling...workout if you can fix them (and please check regularly with the seller and the customer about the fixes - don't develop fixes in a vacuum sitting in your office or factory!).

If you can't come up with cost effective fixes, consider dumping it or selling it in a different outlet, different city, different state, or online, whatever.

Caution! I have to raise my red flag! So many times I meet business owners in love with their product especially after putting so much hard work and money into it, and they can't let it go. And they keep spending money trying to make it a success.

You can't buy more time in life. Unfortunately. A year wasted cannot be regained. 5 years pushing a dud product cannot be regained. When you also factor in 'lost opportunity costs' if you had changed to a better product sooner you are really behind by more than 5 years. Fail fast and fail cheap is my motto when it comes to developing and pushing products. Pivot points are something I'll discuss in another newsletter.

It's not the product but the payment or delivery method

Make sure you talk to the retail outlet owner or whoever is responsible for ordering your

product. Check they are happy with your payment terms, delivery schedule, ordering system etc. Any of these could be souring your product and reducing their enthusiasm to sell it.

Caution! Don't ever ever...ever...assume they will tell you these issues. Often they think you won't change or can't change the way things are. And they probably keep forgetting to mention it. Keep in mind your product is the centre of *your* universe but for them your product is one of thousands!

