

From

Tradesman

To

Businessman

3 Simple Steps

To

Building Your

Business

NEW



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A WORD OF THANKS

To Tradesmen & Women all over the world, I firstly would like to give thanks to you for downloading my ebook. I have taken great care to give you meaningful content that I hope will help you in the pursuit of your business dreams. It is not an easy road you have chosen, but I assure you, if you pursue your dreams with abandon and fire in your heart you will realise them. This I know.

Love what you do every day. Give thanks to the greater power at work in this universe that you have the ability and skill to do what you do. Deliver value to your customers and believe absolutely in your own intrinsic worth. Do not court arrogance or ill-full thoughts. Set your prices and stick to them! Look forward to every day and dread none. Be fearless in your pursuit and KNOW that very soon you will receive your hearts desire.

All the best to you...

- Larry G. Maguire

The Millionaire Tradesman

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book, to my parents Larry Snr. & Phyllis Maguire for bringing me into this world, and to my sister Laura who left this earth at the tender age of 7 years. You give me inspiration and strength every day in the pursuit of my dreams.

Larry G. Maguire

The Millionaire Tradesman

FOREWORD

A POINT IN ONE'S LIFE

There comes a point in one's life where, how things have always been no longer satisfies. A new desire is born from within to pursue a higher goal or purpose. Alas, many disregard the inner impulse to move forward and spend a lifetime playing small and ordinary in spite of the dream of better.

Mere wishful thinking, and belief that the power and resources required are simply not available to them prevail. The thought of personal disadvantage and poor circumstance is the hand that keeps them down, and the dream from ever being realised.

The desire for personal freedom and the impulse to create is at the heart of human instinct, it is what we all seek from the time we are born. Just look at children how they are naturally drawn to adventure and excitement. They have little or no boundaries and are in creative mode almost always. It is our natural state.

MOMENTUM

Now as an adult engage with the world which brings about a desire for change. But nothing ever changes in our world until someone has an idea and exercises the will to see it through. The world is how it is by virtue of the things human kind has created and it is the momentum of these things that keeps our world the same.

Momentum has the effect of keeping you where you are. Your habits of thought and the program presented to you by parents, teachers, peers, media and those who surround you does not encourage growth of unique ideas, it wants to maintain the status quo.

You were brought up in a society where the majority worked for the minority, and the majority believed there was little choice or chance of it being any different. You were schooled into the belief that you must be educated to a sufficient degree and the minority would look favorably on you and give you a job. This is such a hugely flawed thought process.

If you are reading this book, whether you realise it consciously or not, you wish for this to change. It is fair to say that the program you have been given by the people around you is not the one for you. You have a driving force within you to have things the way YOU want. You wish to have things by way of your design!

YOUR OPPORTUNITY

And so here lies your greatest asset and opportunity. You have the urge from within to create. You believe your life should be lived on your terms and by your design. You wish to spend your time here doing the things you love. You wish no longer to simply be a part of someone else's idea, you have your own.

This is a very exciting and also a very disruptive time for you. You have a lot of new skills to develop and it won't be easy. It's a simple process, but not an easy process. If it were easy to change oneself everybody would be doing it. However the process should be energizing and exciting.

You may be starting in business for the first time or you may be operating on a small scale with the wish to scale up to a corporation or limited company, it doesn't matter much, change is disruptive so you'd better get comfortable being uncomfortable.

THE TRANSITION

Tradesmen & women, and other skilled, technical people who have been trained at a particular thing and have become very proficient, generally find the transition to business person very challenging.

In the course of our apprenticeship we are afforded no business training whatsoever. We are certainly not encouraged to pursue skills that business requires. So we simply "have a go" and make mistake after mistake along the way, to the point where we look in our pockets to find that being in business was not all it was cracked up to be. Many small business owners give up after a few years and go back to being employees.

But I believe things can be different.

KEEP ON KEEPING ON

The secret to your success is to keep going no matter what. Once you have a dream of creating a business and it sets you on fire, never ever give up, until you realise that dream. Failure is only realised if you give up.

This book is written to help you, to give you a start, to afford you some tools to get you moving. Allow it be your entry point to a new way of thinking. It is by no means THE solution, but it is born from my own personal experience and identifies the elements as I understand them, to aid you in your journey.

So without further delay, lets get started....

*“Keep on keeping on,
no matter how hard
the going may be”*

Napoleon Hill

A NEW SELF

GOING FROM WHO YOU ARE, TO WHO YOU WISH TO BE.

In the pursuit of a goal we effectively change who we are. The challenges we experience and the road blocks that we encounter, are so by way of this change.

In order to realise your goal you must see the new you. You must find a way around, through, under or over the road blocks you meet. This can be a very difficult time and your success will be built on the foundations you create here.

If you are to realise your dream you must plan & create the new you. Above all else this is your challenge.

*“Dream lofty
dreams and as
you dream, so
shall you
become” - James Allen*

WHO ARE YOU?

WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE WILL FORM THE BASIS OF YOUR SUCCESS.

CONTENTS CHAPTER 1 SECTION 1

- ★ THE SIGNAL YOU BROADCAST.
- ★ THE POWER OF IMAGINATION.
- ★ THE PRIMARY THOUGHT.
- ★ FEAR & ARROGANCE.

Q. So who are you?

Q. Are you “just a tradesman”?

Q. Do you believe yourself to be less than others?

Q. Are you missing vital skills and believe yourself to be at a disadvantage?

THE SIGNAL YOU BROADCAST

These are very important questions and you will need to be brave enough to answer them honestly. This section is about establishing a positive, concrete sense of self, one that will be at the core of your business and will permeate everything you touch.

Did you know others unconsciously pick up on this sense of self that you broadcast? Despite your best efforts you can not hide this. Others form their opinions of you and consequently either support you or not, based on this. Customers, staff, suppliers etc are all attracted to, or repelled from you based on the sense of self that you carry.

This is really important stuff. It is an element of success not many business people ever fully recognise. All the very best and successful, happy people in the world carry with them a rock solid sense of self and disregard the opinions of others, well wishers or not.

THE POWER OF IMAGINATION

You were once a tradesman working on site with your hands, with your tools and you were likely working for a “boss”. Modern conditions in the work place are generally good between workers and their superiors however, in this relationship you were answerable to your “superior”.

In the order of superiority you were way down the pecking. The mindset held by those in this position is not conducive to business success, however if your are reading this book then it's likely you've moved beyond this mode of thinking, or are close to it.

YOUR HIGHEST IDEA

When you imagine yourself in business, you must picture the highest idea of yourself. When you do this you take on in imagination, a very significant level of responsibility. Do not belittle your imagination as it is the birthplace of the greatest (and worst) things in your world.

Whatever you picture in your mind with emotion and desire, you will eventually out-picture in reality. Everything that was ever made was first and idea in someone's mind. Your imagination is a very powerful tool! Be mindful when and how you use it.

Imagination is the birth place of the greatest things in this world. All great things were once merely an idea held in the

mind. When intention to create is applied wonderful things can occur for you.

THE PRIMARY THOUGHT

You can not get anything else from an apple tree but apples. If your primary thought is that you are incapable in some way then that is what you will experience. The construction industry is a tough business, so if you feel intimidated by others you believe are in a higher position to you you're in trouble. You must fix this.

You must do whatever you believe it takes to become more self confident. Educating yourself in new skills and acquiring qualifications is a great way to achieve this. Affirmations are another way to change habitual thoughts of insufficiency.

THE IDEAS OF OTHERS

Creating a new version of you takes time, but with a sustained effort you can and will do it. This is the beauty of being human, we can create what ever version of ourselves we wish. It merely needs a concerted and sustained effort.

Don't take the ideas and systems of others verbatim. Try new things and adopt new practices based on the experience you have. If you gain benefit from certain systems then apply them. Take no one at their word. Always use a healthy level of scepticism and take 100% responsibility for your own decisions.

FEAR & ARROGANCE

Arrogance is fear masquerading as courage. It is a symptom of a person who secretly fears being discovered as incapable or inadequate. Arrogance tells a double lie about you, the first being “I am inadequate, and the second being “Others will think less of me if they find out”.

Fear is a great human motivator, however it can never bring positive outcomes. If your motivation is born from fear you need to reassess. I guarantee it, you’ll never make the correct decision for yourself or your business if you are fearful of a particular outcome.

Fear is the most poisonous thought you can hold and once you identify it you must break through it without mercy. Fear will destroy all chance you have of success. Once you take the first step towards your dreams, the next one will appear. when you know something is right, feel the fear and do it anyway.

TOOL TIP - DO THE OPPOSITE

If you are presented with an important decision to make and you feel a knot in your stomach at the prospect of a particular outcome, then it’s not the time to make a decision. Imagine the outcome you want then take time to “sleep on it”.

“People are never more insecure than when they become obsessed with their fears at the expense of their dreams.” - Norman Cousins

WHO DO YOU WISH TO BE?

WHO YOU WISH TO BECOME MUST BE CREATED FIRST IN YOUR MIND.

CONTENTS CHAPTER 1 SECTION 2

- ★ FOLLOWING THE INSPIRATION.
- ★ FORMING THE NEW YOU.
- ★ MAKING “I AM” STATEMENTS.
- ★ PRACTICING THE NEW YOU.

FOLLOWING THE INSPIRATION

For some reading this it may appear that so far, what I’m asking you to consider is somewhat pie-in-the-sky. I can understand that. There’s a lot of mis-information out there. Business advice for this, books and systems for that. How is it possible to filter through it all?

The information that’s within these pages is my interpretation of an age old concept that says we are creators of our own reality. When we take complete and absolute responsibility for our lives and hold fast to our picture then we see it form into reality. We must break the the forms of normal thought that prevail around us in order to realise our business dreams.

REMOVING DOUBT

I can assure you, if you take on board what I am telling you, and you are willing to put 100% into what I offer, you *will* see the results that prove the concept within these pages. Do it, and you’ll be the evidence you need to witness.

Whatever idea you have previously held of yourself, in order to realise your dream of building a successful business, you’ll need to change it and remove all doubt. The critical thing for you at this point is to trust and follow your inspiration.

The majority of people don’t follow their inspired ideas when they come, because they’ve been conditioned into working for others. Breaking through the layers of doubt in your own abil-

ity is vital, and trusting that the way will appear for you is the safe deposit box around your inspiration.

FORMING THE NEW YOU

Ok, so to begin...

You've got the urge to move forward, to build this business. It may be to make more money, it may be to bring some good into the world, it may be to achieve greater freedom. Whatever the reason you have is not important here, only that you take the step.

Go buy a good quality leather covered notebook. This is important because when you do, you are showing the highest regard for what you will write inside those pages. A regular cheap notebook just won't cut it. If you value your dream you'll afford it the best you can. What you are doing here is expressing your ideas into form. What was once just an idea is now taking physicality in the form of words on the page. My notebook is a **Moleskine** and I write all my ideas and plans in this.

Writing in the present tense and with the thought of who you wish to become, describe yourself in the following ways;

1. *What you are wearing.*
2. *Where you live and what's your home like.*
3. *How old you are.*
4. *The friends you keep.*

5. *Where you socialise.*
6. *What Car you are driving.*
7. *How much money in your bank account.*
8. *How much money you make.*
9. *What investments you have.*
10. *Whether you are married with kids or not.*
11. *How you spend your work days.*
12. *Where you holiday.*
13. *How you are received by your peers.*
14. *How you are received by you employees.*

There are many elements to this and you must decide what ones are important to you. Put into words in as much detail as possible "who you are". Don't worry if you don't have all the details yet, they'll come in time.

TOOL TIP - DON'T STRESS IT

Take care not to stress about the detail initially. If you don't have the detail then go general. The key is that this process feels good to you. If it's stressing you out then it's counter productive. Nothing is more important than you feel good, that you're excited during this process.

IT TAKES TIME

This process takes some considerable time to complete. It takes a while to perfect the new story. In fact it's never finished and always evolving. The idea is that you get the first draft to paper and continually refine it over the subsequent days, weeks and months.

The content of the "New You" story may initially even seem unbelievable to you, even foolish, but you must stand firm and accept that breaking those old ideas takes time. Habits of thought and action are incredibly powerful. Your current habits have taken many many years to develop and will take a determined effort to break them.

MARKETING TO YOURSELF

Marketeers know this. They know how important it is to sustain their message to the buying public. They know that if they keep delivering the same message over and over via the media, it eventually sticks in the minds of the buyers. People are bombarded with product adverts for weeks and months until buying becomes automatic.

You must do the same, only you are the marketer working on yourself. You are preparing your marketing strategy on yourself and eventually your brain will get the message. You'll begin to see the changes almost like magic. You are now leaving a mode of unconscious creating and moving into a mode of conscious creating.

You are beginning to take control of your future experiences. Instead of being like a robot in the world where others deliver the script to you to carry out, you are writing your own script.

MAKING "I AM" STATEMENTS

When **Napoleon Hill** began to first spend time with **Andrew Carnegie**, the Billionaire steel magnate from the early 1900's, Carnegie told the young Hill to declare to himself every night, into the mirror, who it was he wish to be. In Hill's book **Think & Grow Rich** he recalls declaring the affirmation of his new self into the bathroom mirror and feeling like a liar. But he trusted the process and kept it up until such time as it came into his experience.

You see belief is simply a thought you keep thinking over and over. The messages you've been receiving over your life to date have formed beliefs in your mind of who you are. If you are to succeed in your business ambitions you must stay the course in spite of your current pre-programmed beliefs.

Declare who you are using "I AM" Statements and write these in a dedicated section in your notebook. They should be formed around what you wish to experience and written in the present tense. For example;

"I am a wealthy business man"

"I am a successful businessman"

"I am attracting to me all the resources I need"

“I am getting paid on time”

“I am delivering great service to my customers”

“I am attracting to me only the best customers”

“I am happily married with 3 children”

“I am driving a black 5 Series M BMW Touring”

You can construct these statements to match what ever you wish to experience. The key is to write them in the present tense and stick at it. Please note that this is not some kind of hocus-pocus, fairytale stuff. This is a practice to change your thought processes and is scientifically proven to effect behavior.

The greatest of Olympic Athletes use this very technique in preparation for their events. They decide who they are in advance, they see themselves on the podium, they practice the victory before they arrive, they feel their event in the finest detail in their minds before they even get to the track. You must do the same. You are literally practicing your future before it arrives.

TOOL TIP - KEEP THINGS PRIVATE

Write these statements in your notebook and keep it private. Every evening and morning in your quiet space, repeat these statements to yourself without interruption. Reveal it to no one, for they will not understand and you risk attracting their negative commentary.

PRACTICING THE NEW YOU

Every day you must read your story to yourself. While you are reading, if you find there are parts that don't quite fit, or you feel uncomfortable with them, then go general. Stand further back from things a bit until your line of thought feels good to you. Re-write the part of the story in a little less detail so you feel better about it. You can refine it further later.

Remember that your story must be written in the present tense and excite you. You know you are on the right track when it makes you smile. Your emotions are a powerful indicator of where you are, so follow them and adjust accordingly.

Also read your “I AM” statements out loud. If you've recorded them on your mobile phone then listen and repeat. It's best to do this early in the morning before the rest of your house is awake.

A QUIET SPACE

Early morning is a great time to carry out this practice. When the rest of the world is still asleep you have the space to make it count. If you are getting up at your normal time and you expect to fit this process in, you won't. The demands of the day will drag out of you and your mind will not be still enough for it to be effective.

At night before you retire is also a great time to carry out your practice. You are filling your mind with your plan before you

retire giving your mind a wonderful opportunity to digest the information you are feeding it.

Practice, Practice, Practice, and when you're finished practicing go back to the start and practice some more. Finally when you've practiced to the point where you can practice no more, go back and practice again.

A BIT OF SCIENCE

What you are doing here is creating new neural pathways in your brain that form the basis of your new habits. What happens is you'll find, things begin to occur in your experience almost by default. You will begin to notice things you didn't notice before, things that bring you into alignment with favourable circumstances.

Remember this is NOT some kind of hocus-pocus. Studies of human behavior and brain function have proven that consistent focused activity around a new skill, develops new connections in the brain that weren't there before. These neural links literally bring new experience.

TOOL TIP- REMAIN POSITIVE

Remember to remain positive in your expectation. This doesn't mean you get stressed out about things. If you do feel negative emotion then go-general. Tell the new story in such a way that makes you feel good. YOU MUST FEEL GOOD while rehearsing this. Forget about "making it happen" because if your trying to "make it happen" you won't.

“Repetition of the same thought or physical action develops into a habit which, repeated frequently enough, becomes an automatic reflex.” - Norman Vincent Peale

THE BUSINESS

DESIGNING & BUILDING THE
FRAMEWORK FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Now we get to the meat in the sandwich. In the same way as you designed the blue print for your new self in the last chapter, in this chapter you will do the same for your business.

You are the key to your business success, that is why it's vital to build you first, then build the business around it. Once you build a steady foundation within yourself and maintain it, you will succeed.

“Disneyland is a work of love. We didn't go into Disneyland just with the idea of making money.” -

Walt Disney

PRODUCT & MARKET

WHAT ARE YOU OFFERING AND WHO ARE YOU OFFERING IT TO?

CONTENTS CHAPTER 2 SECTION 1

- ★ YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE
- ★ YOUR CUSTOMER
- ★ YOUR PRICING
- ★ YOUR BRAND
- ★ SALES & MARKETING

YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE

I write quite a lot on themillionairetradesman.com of how important it is for you to specialise if you want to make good money. There are much too large a number of guys operating in the construction industry all doing the same thing and slitting each others throats for business. It's a race to the bottom.

Focusing on a particular skill or product within your trade is an excellent way of raising the impression of value in the minds of your buyer. What's rare is wonderful, and what's wonderful people will pay more for. If you can find a niche in your area of expertise and focus on it, you can command a higher rate for your services.

A SPECIALIST PRODUCT

Finding a specialist product and negotiating an arrangement with the manufacturer that gives you preferred, or even sole installation rights is a good move. It will need quite a little bit of research of the market by you, and a few trips to international trade shows to find the right product.

If you decide to go this road, then it will be a real test for you. It means adopting the businessman mindset and a significant level of determination to make it work. Bringing a new product to the industry is difficult because there is no trust and no familiarity amongst buyers with new products.

There is no "taking a punt" on this. You must be absolutely certain about the products viability.

A SPECIALIST SERVICE

Specialising at a particular skill and using products already established, recognised and supported is a sensible move for most guys. Here's a few ideas of what some tradesmen can specialise in;

Carpenter/Cabinet Maker

Make expensive bespoke pieces of furniture- Express your trade as an art form. Don't tell me there's not a market for expensive stuff. The world is full of people who spend a lot of money on things to make them stand out from the rest of the pack. You just need to find where they hang out.

Electrician

Specialise in Testing & Inspection for large contractors. Large Electrical Contractors are always in need of this service. The guys who run and manage these companies have a great need for a specialist who can properly test an installation. If you go this road of specialisation you will be set at a significant level of advantage and can command a high fee.

Plumber

Choose installation of high value water filtration systems. As with the cabinet maker above, you are basically taking a high value item and selling your skills of installation to people who can afford it. If your potential customer is looking seriously at shelling out 5k to 10k to filter their water, then you can do well by installing them.

Roofer

Look into installation of expensive high spec roof coverings. There are roof coverings out there that are being marketed and sold to specifiers who need competent installers to fit for their clients. These roof coverings command a high price and you can make a margin on the product and a good installation rate with adequate training.

THE 80/20 RULE

You know this one right? The 80/20 rule says that we get 80% of our results from 20% of our activities. **Brian Tracy** (The Business Guru) loves this rule, you should check him out. He says that if you have 10 things to do in your day and 2 of them will earn you the most money, then you must do those 2 things and nothing else.

Specialising is a no brainer, but most guys are afraid to because they think there will not be enough work. So rather than go for the 20% of activities that will give them 80% of their profits, they struggle to fit everyone in and wind up with huge headaches and a small bank balance.

TOOL TIP - REMEMBER THE 80/20 RULE

Get a bunch of Post-it notes and write "Remember the 80/20 Rule" on them. Post them all over the place so you'll see them everywhere. This needs to become stuck in your mind. If you do anything, remember this.

YOUR TIME IS FINITE

All tradesmen and women are in the business of providing physical services. There is only a given number of hours in the day where you can earn your income, so one of two things needs to happen for you;

1. Charge a high rate for your service to a market that will pay it.
2. Sell the same as everyone else and scale things up. Utilise the skills of others in other words.

I tried no #2 for many years and it broke my heart. I found it so difficult to make it work given the level of attention required to so many staff, at so many sites, making you so little margin. In my opinion, scrambling around with every other tradesman trying to make a profit in a very competitive market is not worth the effort. I would like to convince you from the above argument that specialisation is the way to go. It's the 80/20 rule.

YOUR CUSTOMER

Sitting right next to your chosen product/service is your customer. When you choose your product/service you are choosing a range of customers. As I pointed out in the last section; What's rare is wonderful, and what's wonderful people will pay more for. When you choose your product (Lets just use product from now on to mean product or service okey-dokey), you are narrowing your customer base.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

This is marketing speak for "what your customer looks like." Compile a picture of who your customer is, in as much detail as possible. Let's assume you choose the construction industry as your market. Ask yourself the following;

Is your customer in design or Installation?

What's their primary business area (Government etc)?

What's the size of their turnover each year?

What do they usually spend on your service?

How many times a year do they buy?

Have they a good reputation?

What pain do they have and how can you cure it?

With your service in mind, what's most important to them?

Who serves them at the moment and can you do better?

What business groups are they a part of?

Who do you know who might know them?

Bring as much detail as you can to the description and if you don't have all the detail now, then that's OK. Take your time to build the profile of your perfect customer and go after them, and only them. Others may come to you for other services and you may choose to do that work also, but FOCUS

your attention on your perfect customer. Become an expert at serving these people and you will develop a strong brand.

My advice for anyone in the construction industry with specialist services is to focus on architects and consultant engineers. If you provide a specialist service then you can be nominated in the design specification which can mean continued referrals and opportunity to apply a higher rate.

THE POWER OF FOCUS

When you take a magnifying glass and focus the rays of the sun on a sheet of paper, the concentration of the sun's rays ignite the paper. Your attention and focus on a particular customer has the same effect. Yes, the sun goes behind the clouds sometimes but it always comes back out.

If you wish to stand out from the crowd, if you wish to make real money as a tradesman in business, then you simply must focus on one market and one customer type within that market. You will by virtue of your perceived expertise, attract to you other business. It's not like you are saying no to everything else, you are simply choosing where to apply your focus.

TOOL TIP - DON'T LOOSE SIGHT OF THE GOAL

Remember, revisit your business dream as you've written it every day at least twice. Refine it as necessary. It's easy to become overwhelmed but if the why is big enough, the how's will look after themselves.

YOUR PRICING

Now we come to price. The area almost every tradesman who ever became self employed has the biggest difficulty with. *"How do I set my price? I can surely not charge any more that everyone else charges right?"* - Wrong.

If you are doing the same work as everyone else, how can you possibly charge a premium? You can not! Only if you specialise can you make more money. I can hear the complaints - *"but I can't ask for more, that's the going rate!"* Yes, that's the going rate alright, at the bottom of the rate ladder. You must get up the ladder! Don't demand your right to charge as little as possible.

You must do it, It's as simple as that, you must set a higher rate than the standard. If you can not raise your self worth to a level that allows you charge 20%, 30%, 40% more than "the going rate" then you are destined to remain a tradesman who makes merely a wage, until your dying day.

You will continue to scrape by making a low income and feeling all those financial pressures you've always felt. You'll continue to ask why you can not make money like that other guy over there. You'll take on those jobs for little margin risking heavy losses on the back of delays or other problems on site.

Setting a rate higher than the standard is about making a shift in consciousness. It is you declaring to the world; "Here's what I'm worth". And guess what? When you take this position and set your rate higher than everyone else in total belief

of your worth, then that's what the world will pay you. Do it with conviction and you will see I'm right. Do it without belief and you will prove yourself right.

STARTING OUT

If you are only starting out, please don't get caught in this trap. Many many guys who have come before you, including your's truly, have fallen for "the going rate" trap.

So here's what to do; make a few calls, ask a few friends in the business, contact your local trade organisation, and ask them all what the going rate is. Then add 30%. That's your rate.

But you've got to believe it. It's no good asking for €75 per hour if you believe your only worth €50. You'll be broken down. This is where the work on yourself, the affirmations, the marketing job you did on yourself in Step #1 comes into play.

Your specialised field of expertise, coupled with your higher than normal rate will mean you are set up to make a profit.

A STORY ABOUT RATES

I was once engaged by a property owner to repair a fire alarm system in a block of flats (apartments) in Dublin. I wasn't on the tools at this time, I got my guys in to carry out the work. Before hand I gave the guy a price whereby I could make good money and he awarded me the job.

All good so far. During the job he asked if we could do general electrical work, and I said "*yes, we are Registered Contrac-*

tors". So without revisiting the quote (mistake #2, mistake #1 was not turning down the work. I should have trusted my gut!) and with the intention of charging him the same rate as I charged him for the Fire Alarm works, we went ahead and did the small piece of work.

My guys documented their time as per usual using day-work-sheets, and I totaled the work. It came to about €500.00. Now the trouble started. Although I had charged him the same rates and was able to produce back up documents that detailed the work, he was totally unwilling to pay the bill. "*You're charging me too much*" he said.

It subsequently materialised after lengthy attempts to get paid, that he up to recently, had hired unregistered electricians to carry out work on these and other blocks of flats for very small money (hence the crappy workmanship that caused the problems initially). He had a low intrinsic value placed on the work of electricians, but he could accept paying the rates I was charging for Fire Alarm works because, as he put it himself "*It is a specialised field.*"

You can't account for peoples perceptions of value, you simply must filter out the ones with low values.

TOOL TIP - SET YOUR RATE & STICK TO IT.

Find people who place a high intrinsic value on the work you have chosen to do. Specialise, set your rate and stick to it.

YOUR BRAND

Your brand is vital to becoming recognised as a specialist. I happen to believe deciding to specialise enables you to develop a strong brand almost by default. It does need work on logos and artwork etc, but fundamentally, your brand will be built on your ability to specialise in your chosen field of expertise. Artwork, website, logos, etc will come as a result of your focus.

I love branding. It's a fascinating subject to me. Branding is almost like a language unto itself. It speaks silently to your audience and tells them all about you. You display your brand every moment of the day, in how you walk, how you do your work, how you communicate with the people you meet in your line of work.

Your staff communicate your brand too, they are part of your brand, they are a reflection of you. I'll go back to Chapter #1 again; Everything you do is a reflection of you, of your inner state, that's why you must create you first.

All the work you have covered so far in this book has been about branding. You are declaring to the world "*This is who I am, would you like to be a part of it?*" Branding is a psychological exercise, and you are building yourself from the inside out.

When you build a brand that is recognised for providing specific value to a given audience, you are building your bank account. Others will sit up and take notice and if you build your

brand significantly enough, you may attract a buyer who will be willing to part with cash for what you've got.

I should say here that you mustn't become too attached to your brand. It's your creation, that's right, but if you allow it, it will consume you and all the good work you've done. The greatest of men (and women, but mostly men), have fallen down from the heights of their own creation. Too much self identification in a business can blind you to certain realities that may be staring you in the face. Beware your Ego!

PHYSICAL BRANDING

I'm not going to get into the technicalities of creating artwork and all that jazz. If you can find your way around Photoshop or some other application and create your own then great, but if you want to do it right, appear professional, and create a consistent message through your website, business cards, vehicles, paperwork etc, then hire a graphic designer.

There are loads of online resources such as [Logonerds](#) for this type of thing. Check them out, get a sample of their work, get your artwork done the way you want it and start broadcasting your message.

TOOL TIP - BEWARE THE EGO.

Don't be afraid to let go of your business if the time comes. It's only an expression of you, and if you did it once you can do it over and over again. The joy is in the creation.

SALES & MARKETING

Your Sales and Marketing message is your voice declaring what it is you do. You can be either structured and deliberate about your message or unintentional and unplanned.

If you do not appreciate the power of a definitely planned message, then you'll be swallowed up by all the other voices out there in the construction industry. It doesn't matter if you are a small contractor or large, a structured sales and marketing message will be the difference between you and everyone else.

Lots of guys are scared away from sales and marketing, and I understand this. It's difficult to understand if you have not been exposed to the benefits. But fear not, this doesn't have to be complicated. Entire volumes have been devoted to Sales & Marketing, so go read them for finer detail. For now here's a few things you can do in both the areas to get you started;

SALES

Without sales you have no business. What you do to generate sales is up to you, but you need to be consistent and persistent about it. Tradesmen have plenty to do operationally during the week, but if you can put a couple of hours aside twice a week you will see benefits.

After choosing your ideal customer (in the earlier in this section) decide to go after them on a consistent basis. Go online and get their contact details. Call them and get the name of a senior person responsible for placing orders in your area of

business. Alternatively, ask someone like your accountant if they know anyone in that organisation. Chances are they'll know someone who knows someone and you'll get a lead in the door. Tell the guy (or girl) that you'd like to do business with them and ask what you need to do to get on their list of approved vendors. It really should be that simple.

If you can't get to speak to them, get their email and send them a message. Tell them you'd like to do business, ask them for an opportunity. Don't beat around the bush, be direct. You will be respected for it, and when it comes to giving a price for works, they will know you mean business and you will be less likely to be beaten down on price.

Don't take maybe or no for an answer. Go back in a couple of weeks later and ask again. Fear of rejection is the only thing that will keep you from getting the business. They will smell your fear and look right past you.

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I did a small job for the MD of Sisk Group the longest est. and most successful building contractors in Ireland and UK, through a relationship I had with one of the Sisk Group companies. It was an AV job and was in his own home in Dublin.

Two years later I thought of him and decided to call him. There's no way he'd remember me as we only met briefly but I had his phone number, so I called him. There was Zero beating around the bush. I reminded him of where we met and I straight out told him I wanted to work for Sisk. He gave me a

name of one of his people and I was shortly thereafter awarded a nice domestic rewire for one of their directors.

Before I called him I was planking it, but I rang him anyway. I ignored the negative voices in my head telling me I'd look stupid, did it anyway and got the result I wanted. You must do the same.

Sales is an area where those with the toughest skin, those most insulated from the harsh words of their prospects, will do the best. I don't accept that we are merely Tradesmen, that we are not Salesmen. We are all in sales, we sell ourselves every second of the day whether we realise it or not.

TOOL TIP - DON'T BE AFRAID OF NO!

I'm afraid there's no room for the timid in the area of sales. If you have a true, firm, quiet sense of your own power then this will be easy. Don't confuse this with arrogance. Arrogance is fear in disguise. Remember! Practice getting a YES first in your mind, before you ask. If you get a NO, so what.

MANAGING SALES & LEADS

Keeping a record of your leads is important. You can do this very simply by using a spreadsheet, or a paper record, but at some point you'll need to up your game and get some software to manage the information. Completing quotations and managing customer sites and contacts can be simplified by using a web based system like **Zoho**, or **Quickbooks**, or **Jobber**.

MARKETING

There are many systems that will allow you deliver your message and I'm not going to attempt to go through any of them in great detail. I'm selecting two that any Tradesman can put in place for very small or even no money, depending on how serious you want to be about it.

1. Social Media

Social Media is an excellent way to show people what you do, and if you are consistent about it, you can really make it work. Use text, photos of your work, links to your website. There are so many ways to let people know what you do and how well you do it using social media. There are many platforms you can choose from also, but I'd suggest you keep it simple and go with the most popular two in your country.

Twitter and Facebook are very strong channels and can give you good results, like I said, if you are consistent. Most of you will be reasonably computer literate and shouldn't have any problem finding your way around both of these. But you will need to dedicate some time to get a full grip of them. Finally, post every day, several times if you can. All you need is a photo with some text to keep in peoples minds.

2. Blogging

Blogging is not for everyone, and very few small businesses take the time to do it, but it's a great way to spread the word of what you do to your audience. Contrary to popular advice from online quarters, you don't necessarily have to concern

yourself too much about key-words and optimisation of blog posts, unless you're really going to go at it seriously. Just write naturally and with a genuine concern for delivering good advice and your posts will do well.

If you really get into the blogging thing then you can step things up a gear, refine it and become more professional. The first step is to go to Wordpress.com and get yourself a website, for FREE! Your business domain will be something like *yourbusiness.wordpress.com*. You can add a custom domain such as *yourbusiness.com* later for a small fee.

You can get some great leads from a blog. Also, sell products, open forums, take orders etc later if you want. I'm just skimming the surface here so for now, if it's new to you, just do some research.

“Sales are contingent upon the attitude of the salesman - not the attitude of the prospect.” - W. Clement Stone

MONEY & ACCOUNTS

THE OIL THAT GREASES THE WHEELS OF THE MACHINE

CONTENTS CHAPTER 2 SECTION 1

- ★ YOUR ACCOUNTS
- ★ CASH FLOW
- ★ FINANCE
- ★ YOUR ACCOUNTANT

YOUR ACCOUNTS

Having an effective accounts function is pretty much a no-brainer. To put it very simply, your accounts is a system of money in money out, of collecting payments from your customers and paying your suppliers. How well you execute this element of your business will determine to a large degree, how well your business does.

My advice to you is to get a grip on the basics and leave all the complicated stuff to someone else, a good Book Keeper, or Accountant (more on that later). I'll be publishing a workbook and templates to help you with forming your accounts function later this month (September 2014) which you will be able to download from themillionairetradesman.com.

THE BASIC SET UP

The basic accounts set up is simply a system of things that you do on set days of the week with a simple formula. This is not complex at all so don't worry. As I said, we'll leave the complex stuff to the accountants.

1. For every job you do, complete a record. This is your "worksheet" which you fill out daily or multiple times daily depending on how many jobs you've visited. (We'll go into this a bit more in the next section dealing with Operations). Your staff need to be trained how to fill out your worksheet correctly too. If not, data will be inaccurate and you will not be able to invoice effectively.

2. Gather the worksheets from your staff on Friday afternoon or Monday morning and spend the full day, or what ever you need, turning them into invoices. Each job you do should have a specific reference number so you can refer back to it later. Note this number on each invoice.

TOOL TIP-DON'T DO THIS AT NIGHT

Working every hour God sends you is ok for a short period, but will drain you eventually. If you can't do your work within 40 to 50 hrs a week it won't be long before you'll resent your work. Try not to do this task at night when you are tired, do during the day with your phone off. You need to focus on this with no distractions.

3. Converting jobs to invoices needs to be done by you, or someone who has direct knowledge of the job that's been done. This is important, you cannot prepare an invoice effectively if you do not have in-depth knowledge of the job. If you don't have accounts software for this then that's not a problem. Get the invoice template from themillionairetradesman.com and tailor it to your needs. Create your invoice with a new invoice number each time and "save as" a new document. I'll take it for granted that you know how to use Microsoft Word or Excel so I won't go into any detail here. If you have software like [Freshbooks](#) or Quickbooks then it will automate all this for you.

4. Send your invoices that day.
5. File your invoices with the associated worksheet so you can access later if needs be.

And that's it. Now you get back into your daily operations and leave cash collection to your Book Keeper or Accountant.

TOOL TIP-DROPBOX

Generally, I don't print a paper copy of the invoice. It's saved in my Dropbox under the relevant customer folder.

There is of course a lot to understand regarding the financials of your business, but that's not what this book is about. Your accountant is much better qualified to educate you on balance sheets, income reports, nominal ledgers etc than I am. Besides, it puts me to sleep....

CASH FLOW

Good Cash Flow is the blood in the veins of your business. I have had the experience of both ends of the spectrum and I don't need to tell you about the stress that accompanies poor Cash Flow.

Your good Cash Flow will be built on the efficiency of your invoicing and cash collection, allowing you to make timely payments to yourself, suppliers and staff. If you are like clock-

work with your process and give it the time and attention it needs, then Cash Flow will be good.

YOUR PROCESS

Your process needs to follow something along these lines. Schedule any daily tasks in your Calendar and have them alert you or your Book Keeper until they become automatic. (See templates on themillionairetradesman.com);

1. State your Terms & Conditions of payment clearly. Include your T&Cs with every quotation that you issue.
2. If you are going to offer credit, don't give any more than 30 days. Also, don't assume you have to give credit at all. Try asking for a deposit with customer orders. Better you get paid partially up front than waiting 30 days for the whole lot.
3. Invoice weekly on or before Wednesday, for the works carried out the previous week. Email so you have an electronic record.
4. Send your invoices via an "accounts" email address. It's more professional and won't cost anything to set up. Also file your email sent items under folders for each customer/supplier for easy access later.
5. Send customer's "statement of account" 3 business days before end of month, every month, requesting payment of invoices due.

6. Follow up issue of statement with a phone call seeking payment. Make sure to get a positive answer, don't be left hanging. You need to know what date the payment will be made so you can complete your cashflow spreadsheet.
7. Watch the payments hit your bank.
8. Pay yourself, staff and suppliers on time in line with *their* T&C's.

TOOL TIP-BE NICE (BUT FIRM)

Too often I've been at the receiving end of a scaldy reception from accounts people in other organisations. I've even had a lady working for me who believed she needed to be harsh and cold when dealing with cash collection and payments. No, no, no, this is not right. It's nice to be nice, so be nice (but firm).

OVERDUE DEBTORS

For Debtors outside 30 days, inform them politely via email, that they are over their agreed credit terms and that you require payment straight away.

Prepare 4 letters of "notice of overdue account". Each letter advises your late paying customer that they are over due. Each letter will be worded progressively stronger. The final letter advises them their account has gone legal. If you run your system correctly you'll hardly ever need to issue these, but be prepared none the less.

FINANCE

I think it's valuable to talk a little about financing your business, because when you start it's likely you don't have a bean to your name, I know I didn't. You need to be careful when it comes to making decisions about accessing finance.

If you have a rock solid business plan done with your financial advisor, with the intention of accessing capital from banks, then you're probably going in big, and have some substantial projects starting off. But for most tradesmen, the starting point is quite small. There's you and maybe one employee to help you out. However make no mistake, you *are* going into business.

For any Tradesman going into business, there is an element of apprehension, and a small amount of working capital required. If you've been preparing for this for a while, chances are you've got your van and the tools you need to get going.

You may need some degree of finance but I'd advise you to keep it small and only buy what you can afford at the start. As you build your profits you can reinvest some of them back into your business.

WHAT I DID WHEN I STARTED

It was January 2001, and I simply pulled the pin on my job. I became totally dissatisfied with working for others that I couldn't take any more. I gave my employer 2 weeks notice and off I went.

I had bought a small car-van just before hand and had acquired the power tools I needed gradually over time, enough to get going. I borrowed 5k working capital and simply started spreading the word. I was concerned that maybe I was a bit hasty but I was delighted to be my own boss.

The work just came in. People I knew started calling me and I got busier. Within 12 months I had paid off the 5k loan (which was a lot to me at the time) and I was in profit. Within a couple of years I had The United States Government on my books and a 500k project under way. I suppose the message here is; just take a step and the next one will appear, and the next and the next. Fortune favours the brave.

Finance is not always necessary for tradesmen starting out and I'd advise you to avoid it if you can. Receiving deposits from your customers will fund your jobs. All you need to do is ask for it.

YOUR ACCOUNTANT

I can't tell you how much accounts put me to sleep. I can do it, I obviously have to, but I don't like it. When you don't like something you don't put your energy into it and so you can never be really effective at it. If this is the case, then you must find somebody who is energised by doing accounts to look after things for you.

Hire a Chartered Accountant and agree what he/she needs to do for you annually for a fixed rate. Their rates usually go up in line with the size of your business.

Your accountant will handle your company returns to the Companies Registrar and Tax returns State Revenue Commissioners. They can handle payroll, produce Management Accounts so you can see how you are doing financially, Bank Reconciliation, data entry and pretty much all other accounts functions.

(Yawwwwn....I think I'll just go for a little snooze after that section...)

“I'm a cash flow guy. If it doesn't make me money today, forget about it.” - Robert Kiyosaki

OPERATIONS

THE EXECUTION & MANAGEMENT OF THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE

CONTENTS CHAPTER 2 SECTION 2

- ★ IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS
- ★ WORKMANSHIP
- ★ EQUIPMENT & TOOLS
- ★ SUPPLIERS & MATERIALS

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

QUOTATIONS

A quotation is a part of your sales process, reflects your brand, and also leads into operations. I use a cloud based software called Jobber which handles all my operational needs. It also integrates with accounts packages such as Quickbooks which is very helpful. It takes double data entry out of the equation.

Most good CRM/Accounts/Operations software provide a quotation module and is available for a small monthly fee rather than a large upfront cost. There's also no tricky installation for you to worry about as it's available via the internet. It's certainly the way I'd advise you to go.

Your software will be customisable to some degree so you can add your logo to documents, change tax rates and currency to suit your country, adjust the layout a bit along with other features. I'd also highly recommend that you attach your terms & Conditions to your quotations by default.

CREATING A QUOTE

When creating your quotation, always be clear and as unambiguous. Give you customer details. Product codes, descriptions, quantities, unit prices, day rates, hourly rates, and be clear about what it is you are providing.

Many companies in many markets think it's wise to keep the detail from their customer. They are afraid that if they give too much detail then the customer will go somewhere else and get

a cheaper quote, or, they'll make some calls to suppliers and find out your margin. Remember fear? Well, that is what's speaking in these cases. If your customer does any of the above with your quote then they are not worth working for to begin with.

Fear will always paralyze. This attitude is so limiting to you. What are you afraid of? If they want cheap then let them go off and get cheap. You're not cheap, you are a specialist, dedicated to your trade, your craft. You have spent years upon years training in your field and you deserve the rates you charge. So be up front about it, never fear showing your cards.

Being up front about hourly and daily rates, exact products you are using, and unit costs is extremely liberating. It says; *"here I am, here's what I charge, hire me, because I'm one of the best you'll get."*

Also, being up front about rates allows you present additional charges with little argument because you have a detailed bill of quantities already submitted in your quote.

CHANGE ORDERS

A Change Order is a single page sales document that you present to your customer where they have requested changes or modifications to the initially agreed works.

You can design this the way you want, but I have a template for you in the "Operations Template Package" available from themillionairetradesman.com that you can edit and use. The change order form should be used whether a cost is applicable

or not because later, if there is some unforeseen negative knock-on effect, then you've got a back-up. The Change Order document works well for residential works.

THE DAILY WORKSHEET

The Daily Worksheet is a document that your "on-site" staff should fill out every day. If there are multiple guys on a single site, then the senior guy should be responsible for completing this document.

It records the date, who was on site, for how long, what was carried out, what materials were used and the customer's signature. This document is especially important where small service work is being carried out. With this document you will have the information allowing you to invoice your customer for service work.

You can also use this document to record extras, or variations that are requested on site, unlike the change order document which is more of a sales tool than an operational tool.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Your T&C's are a very important element of your service. If you don't let your customer know how you like to be paid, and how you wish them to engage with you, then you may have problems getting paid. You've simply got to be up front about your terms. You'll be taken seriously and considered professional if you do. If you don't, you'll be like every other one-man-band out there.

Get serious and professional from the start and you will have set yourself nicely for growth.

CHECK LISTS

Check Lists are a great tool for service people who visit client sites for schedules maintenance. Without check lists your guys will do be able to carry out the required tests in the required order. This one is a bit of a no-brainer but worth including none the less. You can also have your client sign off on the check list when your guys a finished on site.

It doesn't matter whether you in the business of window cleaning, gardening, security systems, plumbing & heating or painting, your guys will perform their tasks much better if the know exactly what is required of them when they go to site. Prepare check lists for your various types of work.

CERTIFICATES

Certificates are generally issued by regulatory bodies so I won't spend too much time on that here. It's really only the technical trades who need to concern themselves with certification documents and those guys will be familiar with their own industry to know what they need to issue.

TOOL TIP- GET GOOD AT PAPERWORK

Paper records are essential if your business is to function efficiently. No matter if you are one man or 100 women, get your paperwork running smoothly from the start. Oh, and train your staff how to complete it properly!

“There can be economy only where there is efficiency.” - Benjamin Disraeli

WORKMANSHIP

Here's where the real meat in the sandwich is for all tradesmen and a section I really hope you take away with you into your work.

Integrity is either kept or lost on the back of the quality of your workmanship. In the execution of your work, the drive, effort and intention you bring become real for all to see. How proficient and accurate, how skilled you are is on display in the final product.

The unfortunate reality in all industries across the world, is that there is not enough pride and positive energy applied to the work people do. Too many people go to work because they *have* to. They go to work because they *need* the money. How many people actually get up in the morning relishing the days work ahead of them? Very few I would say.

THE 1 PERCENT

So the world ends up with millions of quietly resentful souls, going through the dreaded commute to a place they would rather not be. In the modern society, work is not very much fun. Most wish they were doing something else, with the result that mediocre standards are everywhere.

What you are choosing is to change that for you. The current conditions in the work place present a potential advantage for any man or woman who decides to raise their game and produce an end result in their work that shines above all else.

I'm not talking about perfection here, that's unachievable, but a movement towards perfection *is* achievable and should be a must for all Tradesmen in business. 1% is all that's required. Every day aim to be better than yesterday by merely 1 % and the compound effect will be remarkable.

There is one caveat to this mind you, and that is you must *love* your work. I could do a whole book focused on this subject alone! You must be in love with your work, and you must want passionately to bring about a better level of service and delivery to people. If you don't have a passion for your work. if you are simply in it to make money then you will fail, I guarantee it.

If you don't love your work then get out, find something that you are passionate about because if you don't it will eventually catch up on you and you will reap the results. Your intentions must be from your heart if you are to be happy in your work and provide people with what they need.

Besides, it's so much easier when you love it.

TOOL TIP- DO WHAT YOU LOVE

We think we have forever. We think that we are this biological machine that's meant to work and earn money, but that's not true. We have so little time here. Before you know it your time will be up. Don't waste it doing things you don't like. Find what it is you love and do it every single day. When you do, you won't believe people will actually give you money for it.

EQUIPMENT & TOOLS

You know your own tools so no need for me to go into details about them here. What I will suggest is that you respect and keep them well. When it's only you in your company to begin with that's easy, but when you begin to hire staff, that's a whole other ball game.

Teaching your guys respect for tools and equipment can be difficult, because when things are not theirs, there can be an absence of due care. That's why you must train your staff on how to keep the tools and equipment.

If you have a large enough company you may be able to assign duty to one person for keeping of your equipment. Change the person in charge every 3 months so that everyone shares the duties. Keep a log of tools in and tools out of your stores. If a guy signs a tool out, he signs it back in. If he fails to sign it back in he buys it. Make sure to build this in to your contract of employment.

If you have to spend your profits replacing lost, stolen, or generally uncared for tools every year that ends up becoming a significant frustration. Besides, if your people are on the same page as you regarding workmanship then taking care of tools will be second nature.

I'd say I must have lost thousands of Euro over the years from guys stealing or losing company equipment and tools. When there is no accountability then things walk.

SUPPLIERS & MATERIALS

Relationship with others is what builds a business. From your inner state of being you will attract to you like minded and like inclined people both as customers and as suppliers, in a cooperation of circumstances.

Choosing the right suppliers with the required knowledge and access to the products you need is very important to your success. It's likely you'll need to work with many different suppliers to deliver your service, but keeping it tight will help you be more efficient.

CREDIT TERMS

In recent times obtaining credit on a new account has not been easy for tradesmen. Since 2008 and the property crash, many companies in the construction industry were forced to wind up (including mine) causing suppliers significant losses. Understandably it's taking some time for relationships to become reestablished.

This is where you need to be firm with yourself when dealing with customers. Deposit for works is vital if you are to make it work for you. Otherwise you end up funding the job and take all the risk if things go sour. I'd suggest 40% to 50% deposit for jobs you win.

Always include a note regarding deposit in your quotation so you're not dropping any surprises on the customer when they award you the job. Remember to be up front when quoting.

SUPPLIERS OVERSEAS

Dealing with suppliers in a foreign country can be tricky. Obviously you need to account for the exchange rate applicable on purchases, but there's also shipping costs which vary with the size and weight of the orders you place.

You need good margins to account for the extra administration and time you need to spend placing orders. Complex orders can be a real headache if your customer moves the goal posts even a little bit. They may not perceive the implications of making changes. So you need to be clear with your customer from the word go when importing product, that changes to the specification can incur increased charges from you.

When you have suppliers in your home country that you can simply walk in off the street and get what you need it's very simple, but where products are imported you obviously don't have that luxury. Changes can cause significant delays to projects which you can not allow affect your bottom line.

THINGS CAN GO WRONG

When things don't work out and a supplier lets you down with a delivery, you might be inclined to blame the supplier. Few people are inclined to take full responsibility for their difficult circumstances. Maybe you could have ordered the goods a week earlier when you first were awarded the job.

Unfortunately society has trained us to blame others, to find others to take responsibility when things don't work out.

If I know anything after 25 years as an Electrician and 15 years in business, it is that we create our own experiences by virtue of the decisions we make in every moment. Taking 100% responsibility brings great power in realising you can create the circumstances you desire.

“The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them.”

- George Bernard Shaw

CUSTOMER SERVICE

DELIVERING QUALITY WITHOUT SACRIFICING INTEGRITY

CONTENTS CHAPTER 2 SECTION 3

- ★ QUALITY OF SERVICE.
- ★ CUSTOMER SUPPORT.
- ★ COMMUNICATION.
- ★ INTEGRITY.

QUALITY OF SERVICE

Your quality of service will depend on a couple of things, but primarily it will be on how much you love your work. If you can't wait to get out of bed to do your thing then chances are you'll do a great job.

If you are easily swayed and buffered by others, and the circumstances you meet, then doing a great job will be difficult. You'll find plenty of reasons to blame others for how the job has gone for you and never fully realise that you created the circumstances yourself.

Most guys I know will not believe that being a self employed tradesman and being really happy in your work is possible. There's just too many things out of your control that go against you, right? I'm here to tell you that you can make things better if you focus on developing a calm inner state.

FEELING PRESSURED

If you feel constantly under pressure rushing around from job to job only giving customers barely enough time for hello, then they'll see and feel your pressure. They will go somewhere else eventually.

No matter how good you are technically, if you are calm, collected and measured in your work it will be plain for everyone to see and your efforts will be very productive.

Being calm and collected is the result of understanding that there is enough out there to go around, no matter what size of

business you operate. When you *know* you are one of the best out there, and you *know* there is enough work for you, then the applause or criticisms of others won't matter and you can make decisions that are good for your business.

Regardless of what others think of you, you will go into your day knowing and understanding the truth of the matter; It is the thought in your mind and calm inner state that gives you power.

LEARNING TO SAY NO

Your quality of service will be effected by how much time you allow to complete your jobs. If you are so afraid of disappointing someone by saying no, and subsequently cram your day full of things to do, there will only be one loser; you.

Being realistic about how long a job will take will give you the proper time required to do a good job without being rushed. You will gain more respect from you customers by being honest with yourself first.

It also should be noted that charging enough for your time allows you to make enough that you don't feel pressured to fit more work into your day than you realistically can.

A LITTLE STORY

I knew a boiler service guy once, Jim Byrne, I think he is retired now. He was without a doubt one of the best tradesmen I ever met. Now, I don't know if he ever became wealthy from

his work but he was certainly the first guy I went to for a boiler service.

He was not available most of the time given that he was very good at what he did and was always in demand, but that didn't matter. The guy was so calm and undisturbed by my drama that I always went to him first. I didn't want anyone else.

You see Jim was "an old dog for the hard road" and he knew better than to try please everyone. He would say, very calmly and in his monotone voice "*Sorry Larry, I can't help you this week.*"

He knew that trying to fit everyone in was an error only the apprentices like me made. He had been there before and "knew." He didn't need the appreciation of others to justify his sense of self. He's been around too long for that to bother him.

Of course you should do your best for people who need you, but you shouldn't break yourself in two in the process. What's left if you do that? Very little. You'll become irritable and resentful of your work, and crucially, you'll become very unhappy.

TOOL TIP-TAKE YOUR TIME

Take your time. If you can't fit someone in then so be it. Don't try to be everything to everyone, it will wear you out. Business doesn't have to be tough and you don't have to be stressed out, it can be easier, and even enjoyable.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

This section is really for those in the area of technical services. Bricklayers are unlikely to get an emergency phone call at 02:00 am to go and build a wall!

If you are starting a business in technical services then customer support and 24 hour cover is something that you will likely need to provide. If you are a one-man-band then that's going to be difficult. I'd suggest you forget about offering 24 hour cover, especially if you have a young family.

Mind you, I provided it when I started out. I took on most things that came my way then worried later about how to deliver it. Seemed to work for me, but in hindsight, I wouldn't do it now if I had to do it all again. It's too much time on the clock. Your phone has to be by your side night, noon and morning. Your life will be work and little else.

If you're in the area of technical services such as Fire or Intruder Alarm System, your business customers will need cover out of hours for sure.

There are companies out there that are set up to take this function off you, so you should use them. The only trouble is they will promote their own brand when delivering the service and this dilutes your brand.

You may not have much option if you want to go down this road, other than covering it yourself as I said above.

MANAGING SUPPORT FUNCTION

If your business is expanding and up to now you have been handling all the customer service calls on the go, then it may be a good idea to hire someone to handle the calls and log the request in a software system. A spreadsheet can work for a short period, but if you want to get serious you will need to use a system like **Jobber** or **Zoho** to do the job for you.

You can also access telephone answering services that can handle and log the calls for you. They will answer the call with your company name and send you a text message or email with the information from the call. It's a great service that I have used many times and would suggest you go for, before hiring someone direct, at least to begin with.

FOLLOW UP

Following up with customers after service calls are completed is very important. Your customers need to know that the problem has been rectified, and what will be required to fix it if not. Costs for businesses you serve are a big concern so giving costs up front is good practice.

It's likely you've already agreed call-out fees with your customer, so if the repair will cost beyond this agreed rate then they need to be informed before you do it. Don't complete the job entirely without agreeing costs in full. If you do you are asking for trouble.

If you operate in this area, managing all the calls you will receive is tough going. There's lots to remember so you really

need to be on your game. Certain types of people thrive on this type of work, others get completely swamped and cannot handle it at all. Be sure before you take it on that it's something you want. Otherwise it will break your heart!

Here's a few tips to being successful at the service game;

1. Always get rates approved in advance. Don't spend any more time on repairs without having it approved, or risk not getting paid.
2. Never reveal the full extent of the problem to customer staff on the ground. Always go back to the source of the request with the update.
3. Make sure your guys on the ground understand no. 2 absolutely. If they don't they can get you in all sorts of hot water.
4. Get your worksheets signed and make sure all materials used are listed on the sheet.
5. Be on time. If you are delayed, don't wait for the time to pass before calling the site. It's too late then.
6. Use trusted sub contractors where necessary but make sure they are well clued in on your process and they have one of your worksheet books.
7. Always call the client after the repair has been completed. Don't wait for them to call you.

8. Take photographs and as much detail of the repair for your file. If the fault reoccurs you'll need this.
9. Don't use site guys for service calls. Site guys just don't cut it at service work. An analytical mind is required figure out the problem and make the right call.
10. If you are a site guy, stick to site work.
11. Assign each service call a specific job number and refer it back on all correspondence with your client.

COMMUNICATION

I've covered a lot of the subject of communication already in the above section and others, but I'll elaborate here a little more.

I refer specifically to communication with your customers. It is of utmost importance that you know how to read your customer and give them what they want (while getting what you want of course). All engagement you have with your customer is a 50/50 exchange. Every deal you do must be mutually beneficial.

I must mention this because many people out there believe that the people they hire are there to deliver them what they want first. What the supplier wants is way down the list of importance. The truth is that you must get an equal benefit from

the exchange as your customer. You are not in existence to sacrifice yourself for the needs of others.

Being able to listen and read what your customer wants is important because on occasion they may be under their own work pressures. Understanding their point of view can save *you* stress and anxiety, while allowing you to give them what they need while making you look good.

The ability to properly communicate with people puts you at a significant advantage. Underlying emotions and fear on the part of your client can be explosive at times. Reacting to someone in a like manner just doesn't serve anyone. Understanding that others are dealing with their own difficulties is what allows you stay cool when it gets a bit hot.

If things don't work out then so be it. At least you can walk away knowing that you didn't react negatively to the difficult situation. Of course avoiding these situations and being able to diffuse them before they start is a particularly good skill to have.

You can develop this skill by profiling yourself first. Knowing your own profile allows you to see what situations press your buttons and gives you the tools to apply more self control and communicate better.

PERSONALITY PROFILES

There are many things you can do to help you communicate better including studying the common personality profiles with systems such as DISC.

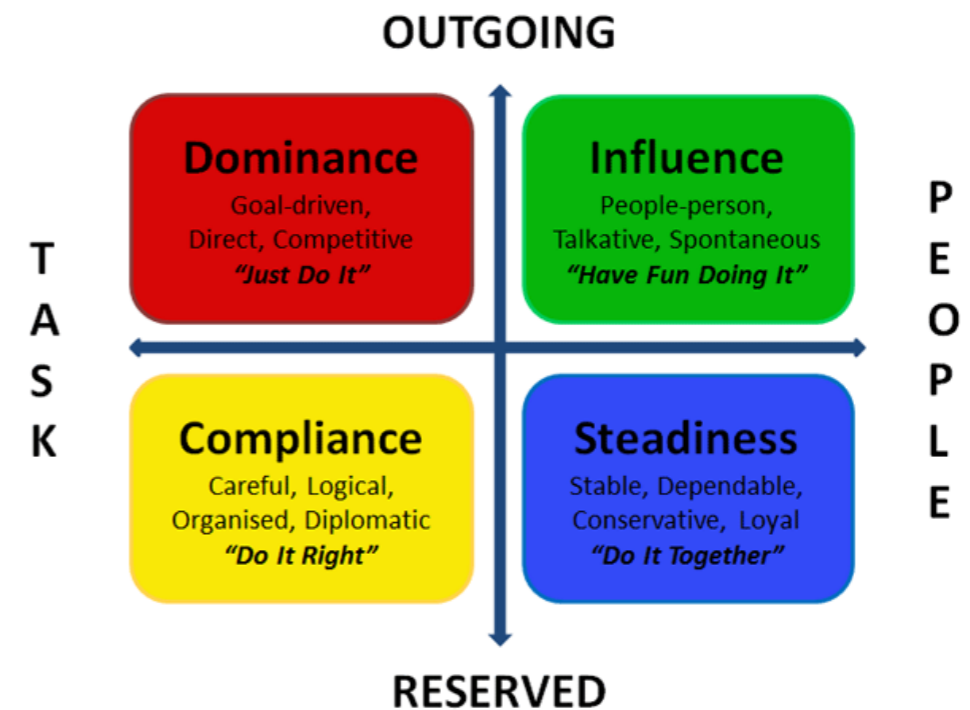
D - Dominant

I - Influential

S - Steady

C - Compliant

Here's a quick view of the DISC. Can you see what quadrant you fall into? You might be surprised by your results. Tony Robbins offers a free test online if you want to try it out.



TOOL TIP-LEARN A NEW SKILL

Learning to communicate better is one of those skills I told you early in the book that you'd need to develop. Go DISC yourself is a good start.

INTEGRITY

I love that word integrity. It is a very strong word. Although others out there in the world will cast judgement on you from time to time, especially when you “make a mistake,” how you believe yourself to be in the face of these things is what’s important.

Others will have opinions of you that’s for sure, but remain centered in your own opinion of yourself and you’ll be OK. No one made you a promise before you came here that you would get everything right, that it would all go according to plan.

JC said; *“let he who is without sin cast the first stone.”* I reckon that’s a valid statement to keep in mind when your integrity is challenged.

Remember; it’s not for others to decide whether you act with integrity or not, it is only a call you can make for yourself. Despite what you have been told from the time you were a child; You are not on this earth to spend your life pleasing others, it is you that you came here to please, and if others gain from your happiness, then that’s great.

Go out and do your best from a good heart every day. Enjoy your work and give thanks to who or what created all this, that you have the chance to play the game. Never fear. Move from your centre and leave happy people behind you where ever you can. That’s all you can do to make a positive impact in the world, and if everyone did this.. Well, we’d be well and truly integrated.

*Integrity; “The state of
being whole and
undivided”*

YOUR STAFF

THE IMPORTANCE OF FINDING & KEEPING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

CONTENTS CHAPTER 2 SECTION 4

- ★ FINDING STAFF
- ★ KEEPING STAFF
- ★ MANAGING STAFF

FINDING STAFF

Business people everywhere say that finding the right staff is the most difficult element they have to undertake in their business, and that's understandable when you consider that the world is completely diverse. No two people are the same.

What all business people including you are trying to do is apply a system of operation on people who have their own unique way of getting things done. The aim of your system is to get your people all working off the same page.

Each role you create in your business needs a person with particular attributes, skills and personality type in order for the role to be played out effectively. The better you understand what type of person is right for the role before you hire them, the better chance you have of finding the right one for the job.

GO WITH YOUR GUT

Hiring people can be very challenging for trades people. We don't have the time to super-analyse prospects to see if they fit. The only way I can advise you to find people considering the resources we have are very limited, is to go with your gut. Go with how you feel.

You could say that going with your gut is the most intuitive. When the analytical mind has control over decisions it can often make the wrong choice. On paper people can look great, but when it comes to execution you've got a different story.

When you are in a good place mentally and you are not feeling rushed, or under pressure to find staff, then that's the best time to find staff. If you hire too quickly then it's likely you'll be disappointed.

TRAINING STAFF

Once you find the right people, it's time to train them. Here's where your operations manual comes in to play. Before they start, present them with your manual and get them to go study it. On the day they start put them through an induction for a couple of hours and run through the contents with them.

Your operations manual doesn't have to be an encyclopedia size document, just enough information that draws a line in the sand where standards are concerned.

You will be starting out on the right foot and your new people will have a clear understanding of what you expect. This way there will be no confusion and they will be less likely to apply their own standards in place of yours.

What I always tell my people is; "Do it my way or find something better. Keep the standard high." I find it's a good principle that encourages staff to keep a high standard or apply some degree of improvement.

If you are one-man-band operation this applies to you aslo. Start as you mean to proceed. Put good practicies in place at the start and you be set for growth of your business. If you don't take the time now you will have a more difficult time applying it later.

KEEPING STAFF

Keeping good staff is vital to the level progress of your business. I would suggest you to encourage your people to continued development. Get your guys to continually advance their skills so your organisation doesn't become stagnant. In fact it becomes better the more advanced it's people become.

If your business consists of only you, then you need to apply this also. Your trade organisation runs courses and training programs I'm sure. Enroll in these, especially the small business courses. Also work on your technical skill set. This will keep you up to speed on developments in your industry.

TRAINING INCENTIVES

Put together a scheme to subsidise course fees for your staff. You could offer them 30%, 40%, 50% of the course fee providing they meet certain criteria such as;

1. The course is industry recognised
2. They complete the course in full
3. They pass the course to a high standard
4. They continue employment with you for at least 24 months after completion.

As your staff advance and gain new skills so does your business. I think this is a great system you can apply very easily and can be very effective.

A PLEASANT WORKING ENVIRONMENT

On reflection, I realise that I may have not been the greatest person to work for in the past. Financial pressures and generally difficult working relationships took their toll on me and it was reflected in my staff.

When you begin your day thinking of stressful things, then everything about your work will be stressful. This permeates everything you encounter, all is dyed with the . You carry your stress with you, it's visible on your face, it's clear in the way you speak, it's obvious in the way you speak to your staff.

I can not stress enough, that your state of mind is the primary player in your success. Everything you do will be born from your primary state of mind. You can say that you are stressed by certain events, but the truth is you created the stressful events by virtue of your state of mind.

After being in business and experiencing both ends of the spectrum, I know this to be true.

CREATING HARMONY

You're job first and foremost is to create a version of you that is in harmony with the world. Only if you are in harmony with the world can you have a positive impact on the lives of others.

When you create a new business and hire staff you are declaring to the universe that you have the power to create this thing and the Universe will respond. How well you are centered in

yourself, and how much peace and harmony you bring to your idea will determine how successful you are, not only in your business but in your life entirely.

MANAGING STAFF

Managing staff becomes so much easier when you first decide to work on, and refine yourself first. I keep saying it, and it's worth saying it again; Get yourself centered first and all else will fall into place, including the staff you need for your business.

When your staff are empowered and focused on their work, when they love their work, you have no managing of them to do. When their values are being met by the job they do, they will carry out the necessary tasks each day and received fulfillment from the role they play.

Your ultimate aim of your business should be to operate without you and provide you with an income, and when you have the right people then you can make this happen.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Providing your new people with clear job description is very important. If your people don't have a clear understanding of the role they are being asked to fill, how can they possibly fill it?

If you don't provide a detailed job description your people will find a way to do the job, but they won't understand really what the job is. They'll create their own system and that's not good

for your business. Everyone needs to be working off the same page, creating consistency for your staff as a whole and for your customers.

What if you went to a coffee shop 5 days in a row, and each day your coffee was presented to you in a different way and at a different standard? Would you continue to buy your coffee there? You'd probably pull the pin after the second or third day!

What if you went to a new barber shop a couple of times to get a hair cut and every time your hair cut was different? You continue to go back? I personally don't have that problem because I'm as bald as an egg, but I'm guessing you wouldn't return.

For your staff too, if there is little consistency in how you operate then the best of them will leave you. You will be left with the scatter brains that only know disorganisation and are comfortable working in it.

TOOL TIP- GET ORGANISED

You simply must get super organised if you are to attract the right people you need for your business. If you are not used to being super organised then you need to get practicing. It's vital if you are to make a success of your business.

“Practice Golden Rule 1 of Management in everything you do; Manage others the way you would like to be managed” . - Brian Tracey

THE EXECUTION

TAKING ACTION ON YOUR PLAN &
SEEING IT COME ALIVE

*A really great
talent finds its
happiness in
execution.*

- Johann Wolfgang Goethe

TAKING ACTION

TURNING INFORMATION INTO ACTION

CONTENTS CHAPTER 3 SECTION 1

- ★ ONLY THE BEGINNING
- ★ THE EXECUTION
- ★ CONCLUSION

ONLY THE BEGINNING

The contents of this book merely skirt the surface of the elements of business that you will need to focus on in the movement from Tradesman to Businessman, but you have started and that is good. I am hopeful that I have given you some good food for thought.

I have tried to emphasise the importance of *you* in all of this, because who *you* are will be reflected directly in what the business will become. No matter if your business is small or large, with 50k or 50m turnover, with only you or with thousands of employees, the principles I've outlined apply.

REFINE YOURSELF FIRST

You must refine yourself first. Weed out all the elements of your current self that do not serve you success. Remove habits that restrict your growth such as;

1. Browsing the internet aimlessly
2. Watching TV
3. Taking stimulants such as alcohol
4. Engaging in negative conversations with others
5. Reading the newspapers
6. Concern for what others think of you
7. Doubt and worry

8. Wasting your money on useless “stuff”

You must replace these negative influencers with positive, affirmative programming. This takes effort however, effort that not many are prepared to make. It means change, significant change in experience for you. People will say you’ve changed and either move away or come closer to you.

You’ll find that friends you thought were firm will disappear and new relationships will be formed. You’ll find yourself engaged in these things;

1. Keeping fit
2. Smiling more often
3. Less inclined to lose the cool in difficult situations
4. Being around your kids and family more
5. Feeling less stressed
6. Reading a good book instead of watching TV
7. Drinking veggie shakes instead of beer
8. Spending your money on personal development material

Your whole life will be positively effected by the changes you make, not just your business.

THE EXECUTION

The execution of your plan is in the next step. You can read and study as much material as you like about self improvement or creating a business, but if you don’t take action then you’ve done little.

It must be said, that you cannot “make” this happen for you. The happening part comes by virtue of an urge to move that you simply cannot ignore. It’s like a fire within you that compels you to take action. If you do not feel the fire in you to take action, then taking action because you think you should, will be a waste of time.

Inspired action is action that brings about the results you want. Action from a thought that you should, or from a thought that you think others are watching you will come to nothing. If you feel that you need to live up to some perceived notion of what success is, that you got from someone else, then you will fail.

Always act from within. When the time is right you will feel it. Take action then, it will prove to be the most powerful for you.

If ever you feel fear or anxiety, then don’t act. You will destroy your opportunity. Action taken in fear of something will always be destructive, never productive.

Short term thinking is a result of fear based decisions. Make sure you always take the long view. The short term view is always the promise that’s too good to be true.

CONCLUSION

I would like to wish you all the best in the world. It is an exciting time for you now. Feeling that you need to move in a new direction that you've never gone before is challenging but rewarding, ultimately, no matter what the short term result.

Whether you see the results you want straight away or not, remember, failure only exists for the person who gives up. If something doesn't work out for you, so what, try again a different way.

Never ever give up!

Life here is short. We get only one chance that we know of for sure, so make it count. Never play small. Playing small does not promote growth, it stagnates and restricts. That doesn't mean you need to build an international business, it means you should break outside your own perceived limits as much as possible.

You see, the truth is we are boundless beings, without limits. All we need to do is find the belief within and anything becomes possible.

All you have to do is believe.

Regards,



Randy Maguire .



*You will be what you will to be;
Let failure find its false content
In that poor word, "environment,"
But spirit scorns it, and is free.
It masters time, it conquers space;
It crows that boastful trickster, Chance,
And bids the tyrant Circumstance
Uncrown, and fill a servant's place.
The human Will, that force unseen,
The offspring of a deathless Soul,
Can hew a way to any goal,
Though walls of granite intervene.
Be not impatient in delay,
But wait as one who understands;
When spirit rises and commands,
The gods are ready to obey.*

James Allen

As A Man Thinketh

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