



Getting *on* it by getting *off* it!

How to get to work on your business

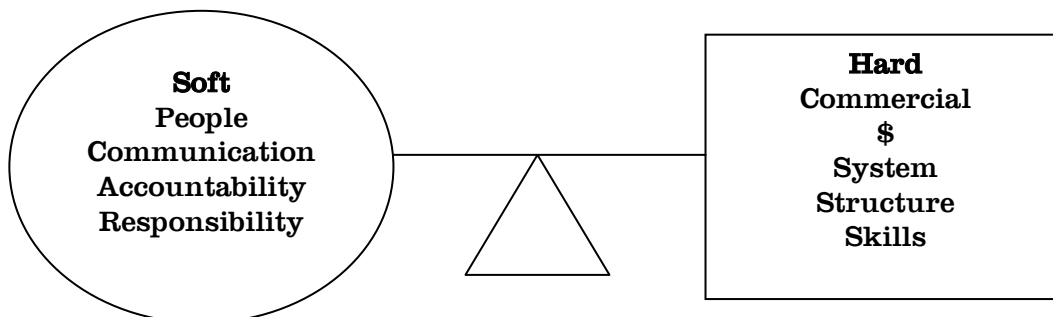
Getting to work on your business more requires you to, firstly, get off the belief that you have no time for this. We will show you a structured, process-based solution that we've been using successfully for over ten years with our clients who are from many different industries and business categories.

The process is simple and involves two key concepts; Accountability and Task Management (at White Room we don't believe in Time Management, but more about that in a future posting).

As usual, the answer is simple and action is the challenge. I can already hear you thinking that this is going to take time and it will become one more thing on your To Do list which will get demoted when a client or staff issue arises. Don't feel alone or rather do because that is part of the problem.

It is because a lot of business owners are alone in the management of their business that this issue exists in the first place and a business partnership does not guarantee a solution, in fact it can compound the problem. Creating Accountability first helps us to move forward from the source of the problem ... you!

Accountability is the human or soft side of the problem and Task Management the hard or commercial side as shown below:





Every problem or issue that arises in a business usually contains both aspects and requires a solution which addresses both sides. This is a cornerstone philosophy at White Room and is particularly relevant to small business owners who operate much of the time from the soft side.

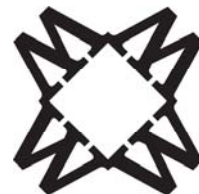
Accountability

So back to Accountability. It is about having someone else to report to, account to for our actions and outcomes and to draw support, encouragement, and ideas. It is not about having someone telling you what to do. Human beings just work better together than alone in terms of achieving powerful outcomes. Everyone who was ever successful ascribes some of their success to a supporter, mentor, or team.

They can help you meet your commitments to your objectives, actions, and vision. However, they need to be able to be objective, and most probably independent, to your business operation.

How to create accountability

1. Identify your support person. It must be someone with a greater level of detachment from the business than you. For example:
 - Engage a member of staff as part of your “management team” they are invested yet objective.
 - Put your spouse or partner (personal not business) if you can work with them, on your “board”. They are stakeholders already.
 - Recruit an external consultant to actively support your business planning and management time with a structured methodology, business acumen, and wider business experience.
2. Agree a schedule of future meeting dates to which they are to hold you accountable.
3. Agree upfront the business’s agenda of issues that the meetings will work on.
4. Set up a specific agenda for each meeting, eg:
 - Update
 - Actions check in
 - Issue to be addressed
 - New issues to be added to Business Agenda
 - New actions
 - Next date
5. Give them permission to give you feedback on your performance and obstacles to achieving results.



Task Management

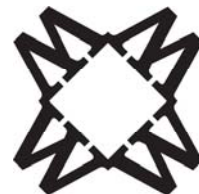
Get your priorities right. Business planning and management (BPM) is just another task in a business mainly consisting of meetings/space to think and plan as the activity. As with all tasks, they just need to be assigned to a time slot to do them.

Understanding though that the value of BPM tasks are far greater than any client or administrative activity is like understanding that to fill a jar with a pile of rocks, pebbles and sand you need to put the rocks in first then the pebbles and let the sand fill in around them if you want to get them all in. Business planning and management tasks are the rocks.

How to task manage

1. Schedule at least six months in advance of the current month. Use a 12-month planning tool of some kind - the front of your diary, desk planners or print off 12 months of your electronic diary system.
2. Put in the public holidays and other predetermined external events like trainings or conferences of which you are aware.
3. Next, schedule your own holidays or days off. This is more important than anything else is. If you have no energy, are run down or ill from too much work then you won't want to do the planning and management anyway.
4. Now schedule your planning and management meetings with your support person in mind and on an energetically-right day of the week and time of the month. Fridays and Mondays are not usually good for this activity. Tuesday to Thursday are generally when energy is up yet ordered.
5. Allow up to ½ day a month for under \$2m turnover business and 1 day per month, maybe spaced fortnightly for over \$2m turnover. This is what we recommend is a necessary and appropriate level of investment in BPM.
6. Now you can use the rest of the time as your role and stage of business dictate for your production and administrative activities and tasks. We will deal with task management in the other areas in more detail in a later posting.
7. Get the planned dates into yours and your support persons diary and advise staff of the nature of the meeting and that it is "Do Not Disturb".
8. Meet where it is conducive to focused activity. Get out of the office if you cannot get your staff or customers to leave you alone. Turn off your mobile phone.
9. Agree that these meetings will not be cancelled or rescheduled unless it is because of death, disaster, or massive opportunity.

At the end of this process, you will have created the space to work on your business. Over time you should also experience having more time available as you resolve the issues in your business in a structured way.



Overwhelmed?

Ok, let me help. Here are the only actions you need to do from this article right now. The rest will follow if you do them.

1. Book your first meeting with your identified support person for a day in the following month.
2. Run the meeting. The agenda for your first meeting is:
 - Do the scheduling of the meetings for the next 6 months
 - Have them unpack your head of all the ideas and issues you have been storing up
 - Prioritise them in terms of what will free up more of your time if it was addressed or have the greatest impact on the business
 - Work on your number one issue and determine the actions to be taken in the next period between meetings
 - Use the meeting agenda above to run all subsequent meetings

By setting up and running this process, you will change a minimum of 12 things in your business that should have a big impact on its development and value.

Enjoy!