

# BUSINESSWISE

WORDS OF WISDOM FOR SMALL  
BUSINESSES WITH BIG AMBITIONS



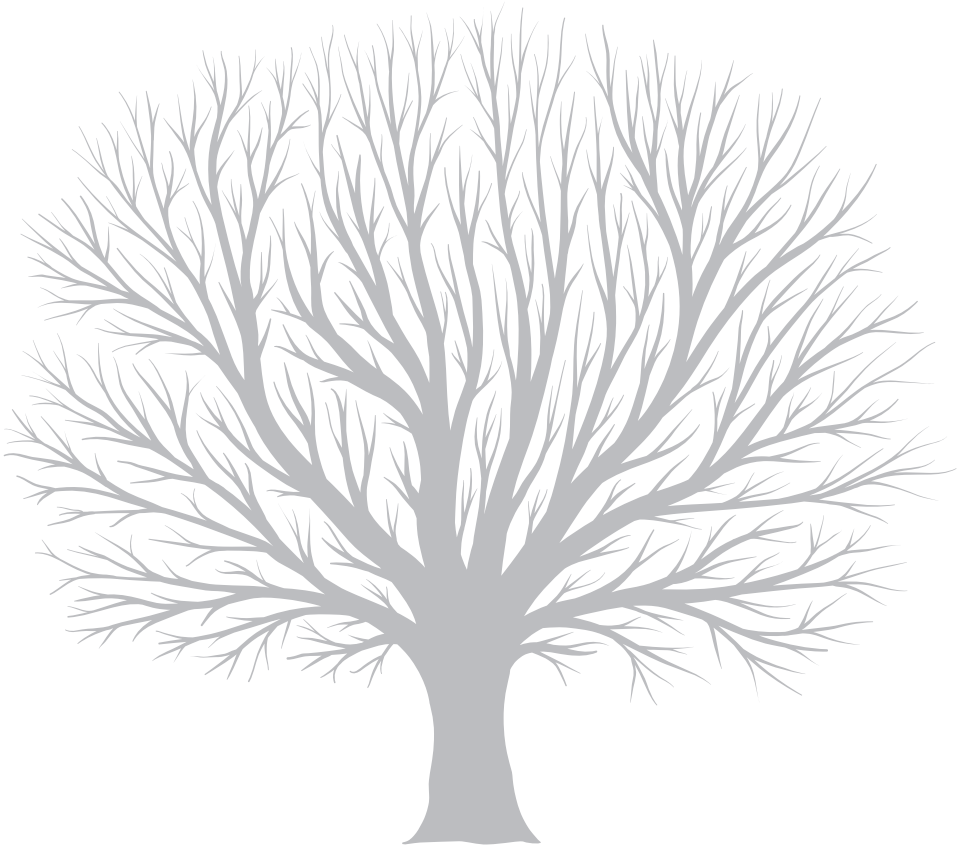
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# INTRODUCTION

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ANDY COOTE

## **Why BusinessWise?**

Businesses often lack access to crucial advice that might prevent serious mistakes in their development. At every stage in the life of a business, there are key decisions and actions to be taken which would benefit from the wisdom of true leaders in business. BusinessWise is a collection of insights and wisdom from some of the top business people around, and will add value to your business whether you are just starting out or established.

In assembling this book, we were especially aware of the power of networks. All of our contributors are life members of Ecademy.com – an online social network for business people. They are the people who stepped forward when we proposed a book to help and support small businesses and the people who set them up with such high hopes. They are exactly the right people to present an overview of business from strategy and set up, through sales and marketing, IT and accounting to the achievement of a vision through collaboration.

The book is organised in a progressive way, from immediate start-up considerations through to future planning. It can be read from start to finish, or dipped into at any stage of the process. Either way, we believe that you will get great value from the shared experience of our business network!

## **Setting up**

Stephen Covey in his *Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*, refers to one habit as “Begin with the end in mind”. So it is with setting up



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a business. The end, a successful business, has to be considered when planning the business right from the outset.

Andy Fairweather opens this section with a chapter on exactly that: 'Setting Up Your Business and Business Planning'. It is a straightforward view on the tasks you need to undertake and the issues you need to consider when you start to build your dream business. There are a lot of realities to consider and Andy sets them out clearly so that you can make the best possible start.

While planning is important, so is the dream. Most businesses are built around the passion of the founders and their vision of how the business should operate. Rob Hook reminds us that having a vision is only half of the equation. We also have to ensure that we communicate and celebrate that vision. His chapter 'How to Create a Vision that Propels Your Business Forward' shows you how.

### **Marketing**

The greatest product or service is useless unless the right people know about it and understand what it is able to do for them. This is the essence of finding your market and explaining what your product or service actually does in ways that interest and enthuse your market. Alan Rae considers the marketing mix in his chapter 'Marketing Online and Off- Line'. Through insights into what drives people and how they think, Alan asks the key questions, "What is your business story? And how will you tell it?"

Part of the Marketing process is the definition of your target group, the people who are most likely to buy or recommend your products or services. Marieke Hensel addresses the issue that many businesses struggle with. How do you attract your target group to your website and through that into your sales process? Her chapter, 'How to Be Found Online by Your Target Group' discusses some of the key issues of what has become known as Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and goes beyond SEO into the necessary research and monitoring to keep improving the effectiveness of your site.

It isn't just your website that is important. The Internet offers a variety of ways to communicate and connect with your customers, partners, affiliates and suppliers. Barbara Saul covers a wide range of ideas with

some good guidelines for the use of important business tools like email and on-line collaboration. In her chapter, 'How the Internet Can Help Your Business', she also reminds us that the Internet is now mission critical for many businesses and it is therefore essential to have proper security and back up in place.

## Sales

Despite the dream that the world will beat a path to our door, for most businesses the reality is that at some stage they must engage with the sales process. It is tempting to avoid the issue and concentrate on refining the product or service offering in the (probably mistaken) belief that the flood gates will open and customers will spontaneously form an orderly queue outside your door or website. The truth is, you'll probably have to get selling at some point – so why not do it from the outset?

It's a sad fact; you have to be born to sell. You have to have the "gift of the gab" to sell. And salespeople are driven, pushy, arrogant and selfishly motivated by their commission. It's all about money. You probably believe you're not a salesperson. Unsurprisingly, you're not alone.

Europe's most expensive and meanest sales trainer tells you why you're wrong on all counts if you believe any of this. Marcus Cauchi is always provocative. His chapter 'Selling Is The Easiest Job In The World' will make you realise how closed-minded you are that *you can sell better*. If you've ever discounted, been suckered into doing free consulting; if you've ever been part of a beauty parade where the buyer lied to you or got you to fight for their business with your competition; if ever you struggle to predict which business will close; or if you ever get frustrated because prospective buyers who said they're interested keep you hanging, then read this chapter. Listen to Marcus. It'll be a very uncomfortable experience. Chances are, if a competitor is taking your happy, existing clients from you, Marcus may have trained them! This chapter is an introduction to the Sandler Sales System and to Marcus himself.

Another approach, aimed specifically at the 'accidental sales person' but with relevance to anyone who sells, is 'Soft Selling– How to Sell Without Selling', a chapter from the creator of Soft Selling, Richard J

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White. Richard's approach comes from the view that people buy rather than being sold to. Soft Selling is a mindset rather than a technique and owes much to psychology, motivational theory and the persuasive use of language. If you are seeking repeat business from customers who want to buy from you, there is much in this chapter to help you achieve that.

In many sales processes, no matter how successful the relationship building, there will be a final request – “Can you get your proposals to us in writing so that we can make a final decision?” Ellis Pratt contends that many sales are lost at this point through poor and inadequate sales proposals. Wherever you think you are in the sales cycle, the proposal is a selling document and is capable of turning a poor position into a good one. It can also turn a certain sale into a loss. Sales proposals matter and in his chapter ‘Writing Successful Sales Proposals’, Ellis deconstructs the process of writing them into a series of clear and very logical steps. He also issues a very important caveat – that a proposal will never take the place of the verbal closing process.

### **Managing Teams**

Businesses, especially those started by professional service providers like accountants, marketers, project managers and IT technicians, will find themselves in the position of bidding for pieces of business that they, alone, will be unable to fulfil. To bid for and win the business, they will need to form teams with other complementary service providers. William Buist has been doing this for some time and shares his understanding of team management with an emphasis on the management of virtual teams. He analyses what teams do and why they fail, in order to learn the lessons of what to avoid and what to work towards when building and managing your team.

### **Finance**

Chances are that, as an entrepreneur, your eyes may glaze over when matters of finance and accounting are mentioned. As Mark Lee points out, understanding the finances of our business is crucial and that having the right accountant can make all the difference. Not all accountants are the same and you need to follow Mark's detailed advice when ‘finding, choosing and using an accountant’. He also

explains what it means to operate via a limited company and the range of topics and areas of advice that we can obtain from different types of accountant. He concludes by explaining why, in some circumstances, only a qualified accountant will do.

Many businesses that seem outwardly successful and that appear to have an excellent business model will fail every year. Why should that be? Because they run out of cash and cash is essential to pay suppliers and the revenue authorities. If cash isn't flowing through the business, all other measures of success are irrelevant. So it is worth paying special attention to Liam Wall's chapter on Cash Flow. With sage advice on what to consider when planning cash flow, and an emphasis on the areas that really matter, Liam gives important pointers to which every business needs to pay full attention.

## **Keeping it focussed**

Being an entrepreneur is very different from being an employee, especially as many businesses are set up to operate, at least initially, from the Directors' homes. In his chapter, 'The Professional Homemaker', Simon Phillips looks at how the professional who is working from home can organise their work and leisure time not to 'do more' but 'be more'. He addresses the delights and challenges of running a business from home and offers many ideas and tips for making the experience enjoyable and productive.

For some of us who work from home or in our own businesses, the expression 'never do today what you can do tomorrow' has a special resonance. With no-one running our working lives or setting our priorities it is all too easy to fall into the procrastination trap. That feeling that you can do anything but actually end up doing nothing is familiar to many self employed people. Nicole Bachmann sets out her recipe to 'Beat Procrastination' which does, as her subtitle suggests, show you 'how to get on with the things that really matter'. Start by identifying your procrastination pattern and then do something about it – and do it now.

## **Communicating and Networking**

Networking will be vital to building and sustaining your business and you will begin to build a reputation. Your preference will be for it to be

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a good reputation. In Judith Germain's chapter, 'When the Doors Close' we meet Keith, who has just left corporate life and can't understand why, even though he has a good network, work is just not coming in. He discovers the need to build his reputation and credibility (online and offline) is the only way that he will survive. Additionally he learns to build advocates through good content in blogs and through focused networking, which means Keith's story ends positively. Too many people in Keith's situation will find that their story ends negatively unless they make the effort to be seen by the right people and in the right way.

The meaning of your communication is in the understanding of the recipient. No matter how good your proposition, it is useless unless those who need to know about it get to hear. 'Getting your Message Across' is a chapter by a communications expert, Mindy Gibbins-Klein. Mindy is a top UK writing and publishing consultant who helps business people develop their message and express it in books, articles and blogs. As 'The Book Midwife', Mindy has brought many books into the world, including this one. Mindy suggests that you take it S-L-O-W when planning and articulating the message that you want for your business. In today's fast-paced world, it is well worth the effort of following Mindy's advice.

It may seem that the whole world, especially on the Web, speaks English and to draw from that the conclusion that there is no need to worry about the many other languages of the world. It is worth remembering that precision of meaning can be lost when reading in a second or third language. Most businesses should be considering having brochures, reports, web pages and letters written in the language of the intended recipient. Pierre Leonard specialises in translation to and from many languages and he makes a very strong case for using professional translation. Your business may depend on getting your message across clearly and congruently with both cultural and linguistic norms.

Translation is not just needed in language. Networking internationally involves ensuring that your networking behaviour also conforms to cultural requirements. With changes to the options and opportunities for international communication and networking, come new challenges about being understood by and getting our message across to people who share few of our cultural norms. It is an environment where patience, tolerance and allowing people the credit for good

intent in their communications is crucial. We all know where cultural misunderstandings have led throughout history. Could it be different with cultural understanding? Nicole Bachmann offers some thoughts and advice.

## **Strategies for a long-term successful business**

Your business is going to depend on you as it grows. Even if you begin to outsource or delegate areas of your business, you remain the person most committed to the ultimate success of your business. Long term health, of the body and of the mind, will be, or at least should be, a priority for most business owners. The cost of medical treatment varies by country but the cost to a business of the absence of its driving force is often all too predictable. Elaine Gold works with people who want to make positive changes in their health and she shares some tips and hints for achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Borrowing from Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elaine maintains that ‘your first wealth is your health’.

Finally, Tom Evans extols the virtues of collaboration. He suggests that collaboration is ‘intrinsic to human survival and existence’. Certainly, when it comes to making a business a success, it is unlikely that all of the resources needed will be available to or affordable by a single small business. Collaboration takes place all of the time and Tom suggests that this is a very good thing and something that can be made more successful by approaching it in the right way. He uses examples from the iPod to this book to demonstrate that collaboration is all around us and not just for small businesses. His contention that collaboration is the future of business and has never been easier to achieve is well supported by examples and practical applications.

## **We wish you every success in business**

This book is a tool to help you succeed in developing an idea into a business and a business into a success that will become your livelihood and your pension if grown successfully. The main ingredients though are not in this book. Without you and your energy and passion for your idea, nothing will happen. Indeed, all the advice in this book will be of little use without that. Whether you read this book from the beginning through to the end or dip in chapter by chapter, we hope that our insights, advice and guidance will be useful and inspirational. If we

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help make your business better and more rewarding in all senses, we will have achieved our outcome.

**ANDY COOTE** is a Director of Ecademy Press ([www.ecademy-press.com](http://www.ecademy-press.com)), a cooperative publisher with a list of business and personal development books. Andy is also co-author (with Penny and Thomas Power) of *A Friend in Every City*, a book, published by Ecademy Press, about the changing world of work and leisure and the crucial role of online and offline networking in it. Andy is a life member of Ecademy.com and networks widely both online and offline.

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# BEAT PROCRASTINATION ..... NICOLE BACHMANN

In running our own business it is vital that we achieve what we set out to achieve. This is why we create a vision, concentrate on a mission and set goals and targets.

So, how come very often we find ourselves wide of the mark? We find ourselves spending too much time doing things that need to be done, but don't necessarily contribute to the success of our business and/or the achievement of the set vision and goals?

What gets in the way are habits/patterns that we have been nursing and 'practicing' for years and years. Not necessarily voluntarily and mostly not consciously, but we have been practicing them. Which is why we find ourselves struggling, instead of homing in on our goals and making them reality by going the shortest possible route to success.

In short, we procrastinate. We keep things 'for tomorrow' (which is what the Latin word 'crastinus' means, giving procrastination its name.)

The good news is: we can stop. We can do something about it, if we look at the problem using our EQ, rather than our IQ.

Our Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ) is more use in beating procrastination than our Rational Intelligence Quotient (IQ) could ever be. This is because procrastination is NOT a rational problem.

Something is going on underneath, on an emotional level, which keeps us in those procrastination patterns – and the illusion that there's nothing we can do about it, is part of the pattern.

In this chapter, we'll look at the most common procrastination patterns, identify them, look at how they influence our sense of self, and how



we can make some changes. – And then we'll look at a new way of setting yourself up for success, so you'll achieve your goals and get yourself and your business to where you always knew it could be.

Let's start by 'naming and shaming' the most common

## **Procrastination Patterns**

- 1. Last Minute Mania** - probably the most popular, which is why we start with it.

Leaving everything to the last minute, rushing around in the end, and really pushing the boat out to achieve/deliver the task in the end.

Some of us get off on the adrenaline of that. Some people even confuse it with Just in Time management.

Great stuff, isn't it? – If it weren't for that nagging feeling right after, which whispers: 'of course, I could have done better, if I'd had more time'... added to by some pressure from your colleagues/peers/staff, who don't appreciate always having to wait for you to deliver.

Or you might have a colleague/client/supplier who does it to you? Not quite as much fun on the receiving end, is it?

- 2. Avoiding Effort** – a very interesting pattern:

You're smart, creative and always able to make the right decision – so taking on this task/goal/project will be easy for you....

However, when things get tough, and you are down to the boring implementation rather than the big idea, you get a frustrating feeling: 'I should be able to do this easily. Why is this hard?'

You start to worry so much about not being able to do this task/goal/project or facing the disappointment of having to work hard that you start to delay or even avoid it.

- 3. The Lone Ranger** – very popular with people at the helm of a business.

You feel you can – or even MUST – do everything yourself.

Either because you're so smart, creative and amazing (remember No 2?) – or there is a sense of 'If I ask for help or delegate any responsibilities, it is a sign of weakness and lack of ability'.

This creates a feeling of isolation and overwhelm, and unable to do everything yourself you resort to delay or avoidance.

**4. Paralysis by Analysis** – another favourite.

You are taking on a goal/task/project. Before you begin, you start to analyse what and how it needs to be done. – This is good, as it is necessary to plan a project through – ideally step by step.

However, while analysing, you start to convince yourself that this has to be done the 'right' way. And until you've identified that way, it's no use getting started. You might only have to undo some of what you've done already.

You are reluctant to commit to any course of action without more analysis. - And the more you analyse, the more potential risks you identify, which need more analysis...

This zero risk approach leads to complete paralysis, and nothing happens with the project at all.

**5. Choosing to Lose** – slightly surreal, this one.

Do you hate losing? Do you hate losing so much you avoid situations which bring you into competition with people? – Welcome to the Choosing to Lose procrastination pattern. Procrastination provides the perfect way to avoid competing with others. Avoiding competing with others guarantees failure. If you don't compete, you can be absolutely certain that you're not going to win.

So you are spending all that energy to achieve something you hate. Interesting? Weird? – Possibly both, but that's how it works.

You console yourself with a sense that 'I would have won, if I'd tried', which preserves your illusion of being a winner.

However, looked at closely, the illusion fails to convince, which increases the fear of ever competing...

**6. Focusing on What's Missing** – last, but by no means least

We are all good at this. Interestingly, it often stems from the fact that we've been taught not to put ourselves forward when we were young.

It manifests itself in a sense that 'as long as this project/task/goal isn't finished, I haven't accomplished anything'. So we're climbing up this mountain of a task, and all we concentrate on is how much further/steeper we have to climb.

This leads to exhaustion/feeling overwhelmed with the task: 'I'll never get there'.

Because we've never stopped, looked back at what we have achieved so far and celebrated the progress we have made, we get discouraged and/or give up.

**So what's going on???**

Why are we torturing ourselves in this way? – If we recognise the things we are doing to ourselves, why don't we stop, rethink and make some different choices?

The answer lies in the way we have learnt to approach problems.

Albert Einstein said: *'the intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift.'*

Throughout our education, we are taught the value of rational thinking over our intuition and inner knowledge. Only if something can be analysed, proven and logically argued can it be true. And, of course, in various fields it is very important to be so scientific.

For example: if you hire an architect to build you a home, you'd be probably not very happy, if he designed something that he 'felt would stand up and remain stable in a storm'... – You'd expect something more concrete.

So, using our Rational Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is good.

However, since the early 1990s and the introduction of the Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ), more and more social scientists agree that to evaluate the real contribution and ability of an individual, we need to take the Emotional Intelligence of a person into account.

The emotional side of our brain manages our feelings, comfort zones and fears as well as influences our beliefs and assumptions. They lead to our expectations and attachments, which in themselves influence our actions and behaviours. In short, the EQ defines how we see ourselves – our sense of self.

For most people what they do strongly influences their sense of self – they are performance driven. They concern themselves with what, how and when they do something – or should be doing something. They have an expectation about their ability to perform, and are usually quite attached to that expectation.

Our expectation of ourselves, and how attached we are to that expectation is influenced from early childhood on by a variety of factors, including our own perception of ourselves in the world around us, our parents'/teachers' views, our peers' views, and similar.

Together, these things create a sense of self. Interestingly, the expectation we have of ourselves is usually higher than the expectation we have of others – and probably also the expectation others have of us.

The problem starts when we fall short of our expectation of ourselves. We are experiencing that our image of reality isn't necessarily the same as that reality.

Depending on how big the gap is, our doubts and limiting beliefs create more and more resistance to our aim to achieve. We start to sabotage ourselves. Eventually we stop achieving, procrastinate about a task/goal/project – or, in the worst case, stop even trying to achieve.

If the what, how and when can't help us to turn that cycle around, what can?

The purpose or why. If we start to concentrate on the purpose of our actions and ask ourselves WHY we are aiming to achieve this particular task/goal/project, and we can find an answer that is congruent with our values and with who we really are, we can override the resistance, and achieve success.

Further down in the chapter we will propose a model that helps you to go through this process for every goal/task/project you set yourself, called Goal Setting Beyond SMART.

But before we go there, let us spend some time looking at

## **The Obstacles to Change**

There is a hierarchy to what gets in the way of change, which is why we list the most common obstacles to change below in a particular order.

### **1. Lack of Motive**

This is the most basic obstacle to change.

You are at a stage when you are – and life is – comfortable enough. Why would you want to change at all? – Things are great the way they are.

The problem is that the only constant in life is change – Our life/situation/job will change, whether we like it or not.

The question we need to pose ourselves is, whether we would like to be the author of the change in our life, or whether we are happy to let life dictate change to us.

### **2. Putting Change off**

You have progressed to the stage where you have made the choice that change is necessary, if you want to remain in control of things. However, there is no urgency to your desire to change.

You have a sense that you have other priorities. You can make this change anytime, just not right now. - The danger is that we get accustomed and comfortable with the idea that we will make a change tomorrow/next week/next month. Then, all of a sudden, we realise we have missed the particular opportunity we have been waiting for.

The only thing we have 100% control over is ourselves in the present moment. We either exercise control, or we don't. If we fail to make our choice in the present, it is likely that someone/something else will. The question is, whether we like the consequences of their choice.

### **3. Lack of Awareness of which change to make**

In that stage you have a definite sense that something is not 'right'. You are no longer comfortable. At the same time, you can't put

a finger on what's wrong and therefore find it hard to know how to change it.

This is a very difficult and frustrating phase. The patience required is very hard to come by, especially as it is highly likely that the solution lies within our emotional realm, which makes it inaccessible to our rational understanding/analysis.

It is therefore more a question of feeling into our discomfort and 'sense of wrong' rather than trying hard to 'figure it out'. Have you ever tried to remember a name/place/film desperately and it eluded you the more you tried? – And then you gave up and 'forgot about it' – and suddenly some time later it popped into your consciousness?

The process required here is similar: We need to let our emotional intelligence get on with solving the problem, without constantly berating ourselves for not having found a solution yet.

If we can muster that patience, the reward is first an awareness and then an inner knowledge of what the required change is. This enables us to then think about how we are going to effect that change.

#### **4. External Influences/Resistance**

Once we have reached the inner knowledge of what we need to change and how we want to go about it, the battle is still not quite won.

What might well happen at this stage is a certain amount of external influences or even resistance. There are two sides to this particular obstacle to change:

- a)** The actual/real resistance to the change coming from our environment (our peers, family, colleagues, friends, in short 'others').

The question to ask yourself here is who will ultimately bear the consequences of your decision – others or yourself?

A way to break this deadlock could also be to think about and discuss the consequences of NOT acting. Everything we do or don't do has consequences – the question is which of the two

gets us the desired consequences?

**b) Your perception of the external influences/resistance.**

Again, the questions to ask yourself here have to do with the consequences of our action/non-action.

However, it might be worth investigating first whether your perception of how others (whose opinion matters to you) see your decision is actually correct by asking them.

This might be a very difficult step to take, but taking it has two advantages:

- 1) You know what their real reaction is, rather than creating a monster out of some untested perception of what they might think.

Knowledge allows a dialogue – or in the worst case (where a dialogue is not possible) you can take into account the real cost/consequence of your action/non-action. If you lose a friend over it, do you still want to go ahead?

- 2) It gives your ‘significant others’ the opportunity to feel part of your decision and therefore might facilitate their buy-in earlier and more easily.

**5. Internal Resistance**

This is the final frontier. - It goes back to what we said earlier about our sense of self, and how we identify ourselves with our expectations of our perceived ability to perform.

The two most common questions at this stage are:

- 1) ‘Who will I be without my old patterns/situation/habit?’

and, probably even more scary:

- 2) ‘What if I fail?’

The answer to 1) goes back to the purpose (the why) being the key to overcoming resistance to change.

If we are clear about the purpose of the change/decision we are making AND have taken into account the consequences of both action and non-action, it becomes easier – or at least possible – to make the change.

Purpose gets us commitment, and commitment is the ONLY thing that gets us action. We will talk about commitment some more when we talk about Goal Setting beyond SMART.

How to deal with 2) is more challenging, as there is no such thing as completely risk free change (remember Paralysis by Analysis). Taking risks involves a certain amount of discomfort.

If you insist that your life be 100% comfortable, 100% of the time, you will not be the initiator of your change.

As we discussed above, it is certain that your situation will change – the question is whether you will be driving that change, and if not, whether you will be happy with the consequences.

A possible way to ‘disarm’ the ‘What if I fail?’ question is playing the ‘What if –up’ game.

‘What if I fail?’ usually leads us to play the ‘What if – down’ game. - We start to imagine ‘What’s the worst thing that could happen?’

When playing the ‘What if – up’ game, the question to ask is, ‘What’s the best thing that could happen?’ – and to play it to the same – or even greater – intensity than we played the ‘What if – down’ game.

Having looked at the obstacles to change, let’s move to some

## **Top Tips to Overcome Barriers to Change**

### ***1) Personal Change can – and most probably will – feel uncomfortable***

#### **➤ Increase your capacity for discomfort.**

Remind yourself there is no such thing as risk-free change, and that every time you step out of your comfort zone and stay there (!), your comfort zone expands.

Remind yourself of the times you have done something for the first time in the past, and how you felt about it. For example: when you learnt to ride a bicycle – How did you feel trying to stay on when you first got on it? How did you feel after a few tries, when



your parent/guider let go or you took off the supporting wheels? And how did you feel when you'd finally mastered it and went for your first ride on your own?

☞ **Extend your comfort zone steadily**

Step by step you go far. It is much easier to make a lot of small changes than one big one, and a lot of small changes add up quite quickly.

**2) Don't change everything at once**

☞ **Find your leverage points**

What is the one thing that, if changed, would make the biggest impact on achieving your goal/task/project?

☞ **Prioritise your changes**

It is highly unlikely that you will be able to do everything at once. Find your leverage points and go for those first. Don't forget to celebrate the small successes – remember to avoid the 'Focusing on What's Missing' pattern!

**3) Create a support system**

☞ **Let important people, or those close to you, know your plans**

Remember what we said under 'External Influences' as Obstacles to Change above. If you involve those close to you in the process and discuss their part in the change, you are much more likely to have their support.

Choose those you ask for support well. Who do you know, who is a positive person and is happy to change and grow themselves?

☞ **Get an objective viewpoint and sounding board (e.g. a coach)**

Talking with colleagues, friends and family about your goal/task/project can be very helpful. If they are supportive they can be a great source of comfort and strength for you.

The difference of getting a coach involved is that s/he comes to the conversation without an agenda of his/her own. Your 'significant others' have your best interest at heart, the way they see it. A

coach has your best interest at heart the way YOU see it.

#### **4) *Setbacks and Frustrations are part of life***

##### **☞ Increase your tolerance level**

Remember that gravity is a fact of life on this planet – i.e. life gets in the way of things/plans/goals.

If you get frustrated with not reaching the goal/task/project, or not making enough progress, be aware that you are actually frustrated with the way the obstacle makes you feel.

If, when learning to ride a bike, you had spent all your energy concentrating on the fact that you fell off, would you have continued to try? – Probably not. You did continue, though. You concentrated on the fact that you wanted to ride that bike – and every time you fell off, you just got back on and tried again.

##### **☞ Learn to mitigate key risks**

Think about the potential risks and consequences of your action/change, and see whether there is a way to minimise them. Beware Paralysis by Analysis, though, and remember that any change always carries with it a certain amount of risk.

Think about it this way: if your goal is to jump out of a plane and survive to tell the tale, it might be a good idea to pack a parachute – and to test the parachute on the ground beforehand. Once it tested successfully, get on the plane, jump, and enjoy the scenery. Don't spoil the experience with worrying about whether the parachute will open.

#### **5) *There is no such thing as Failure***

Only outcomes you can choose to respond to. Remember what we said about focusing on riding the bike, rather than on falling off.

#### **6) *In any situation you have a choice: Accept it, or Change it***

This is probably quite a stretch when you first read it.

We all know situations, where we felt out of control and powerless to change anything. We had to accept it, but we didn't like it one

bit – and it suddenly didn't feel like much of a choice.

That is exactly where the challenge lies. If you cannot change your environment/situation – you can change your attitude to it.

This is about accepting the situation as being outside our control and then asking ourselves: If I have to live with this/do this/accept this, how can I make the best of it? What's the learning/opportunity that this could lead to?

The other important thing to bear in mind is that changing it or accepting it are both equally valid choices. If the situation is not important enough for you to change it, give yourself permission to accept it and feel good about accepting it. It is a choice you made, so back it.

### ***7) Take responsibility for creating your life the way you want it***

Responsibility is where it's at. Taking responsibility for the choices we make empowers us, because it confirms that we are in control. And we like being in control.

The important differentiation here is taking responsibility versus taking the blame. How do you feel, if you are blaming yourself/others for the situation you are in? Powerful? In Control? - Thought not. And what happens to your motivation to change, once you feel out of control/disempowered? - Gone with the wind...

Taking responsibility, on the other hand, empowers you to make choices that move you towards your desired consequences, and allow you to learn and grow.

There is one more piece in the jigsaw that you might find useful in your new approach to personal effectiveness and getting on with the things that really matter, and that is our model of

## **GOAL SETTING BEYOND SMART – The BIG PICTURE**

Having looked at the most common procrastination patterns, the role of our EQ to change them, as well as some common Obstacles to Change and gathered some Top Tips to overcome those barriers, we need to add one more important weapon to our armoury to help us beat procrastination.

There are many models around to help you with goal setting. - One of the most popular is focused on how you define your goals, and establishes that you need to set SMART goals to be successful in achieving them.

**SMART** goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable/appropriate/actionable
- Relevant/realistic/result
- Timed

This is an excellent model and setting SMART goals is definitely a good place to start.

However, given what we discovered above about what keeps us from achieving our goals, and that it has to do with our emotions and how we manage them, it becomes clear that something is missing. - We need to involve our EQ. This way we set ourselves up for success, rather than getting discouraged half way.

Below you will find a graphic of our **Big Picture model** which enables you to set goals that you will achieve – and enjoy achieving.

When using it, imagine the map it draws on your floor, so you can go through it step by step.

Start at the green arrow on the left, the goal set-up. Identify your goals and list them. Check whether they are SMART. Then go through the process below for each separate goal.

There are 4 important questions to ask yourself at the goal setting stage, and in that order:

1. Is this goal in MY best interest (rather than what my partner/parents/siblings/peers think is my best interest)?
2. What specifically do I want to change/achieve?
3. Why is now the right time to change/take on this goal?
4. Am I emotionally committed to this goal?

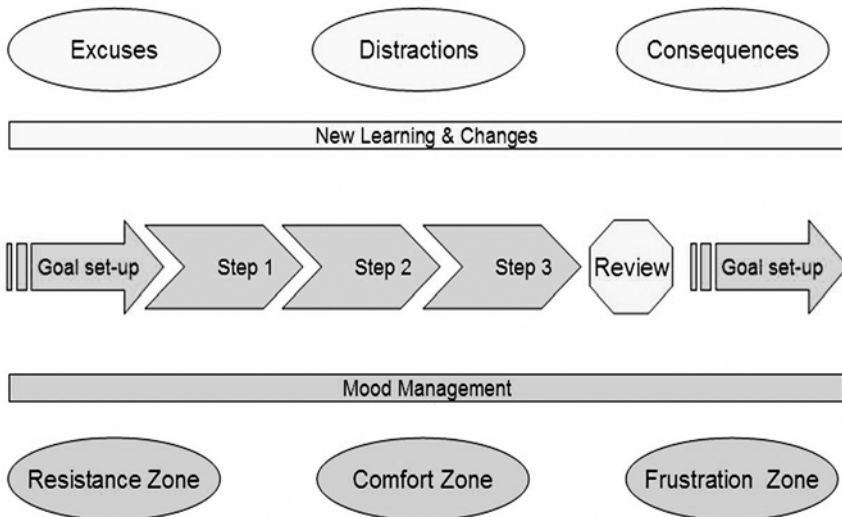
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Question 4 is the 'killer question' or acid test – if you are NOT committed to the particular goal you are going through the process for, choose one of the following two options:

- a) Abandon the goal
- b) If you don't want to take action a) ask yourself, 'What do I have to change about this goal that will make me commit to it emotionally?'

If you attempt to achieve a goal you are not committed to, it is highly likely that you will not get there. Look back at what we said above about the importance of purpose in achieving anything. Purpose gets you emotional commitment, and only emotional commitment gets you action.

Now that you have a SMART goal that you are emotionally committed to, let's look at the model:



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The **area at the top** represents the main *behavioural aspects* which are easier to get in touch with and which we need to manage differently:

- **Excuses** we tell ourselves and others.
- **Distractions** that sidetrack us from making decisions, taking initial action, following through or completing.

- **Consequences** of procrastination with your goal and/or giving up on it.

By being aware of our behaviours and learning to do things differently we can make the necessary changes.

Through the middle we have the “*plan, do, review*” process common to many goal setting systems.

The keys here are:

- **Goal set-up** to define a *realistic* and *specific* goal, or what we call a ‘chunk of change’. This is unlikely to be the whole thing, but the next prioritised stage, with a clear outcome - setting it up so it feels right and doable for you. Making it feel right is what makes this different from a solely intellectual exercise such as simply filling in the words around acronyms like SMART. (This bit you have just gone through above)
- **Steps 1-2-3** provide a simple way to think about getting going on this stage of your goal or change. Often we only think about THE next step. Build momentum by identifying and scheduling three activities that you can do which take you nearer the outcome you identified in setting-up your goal.
- **Review** is often overlooked. Here you want to acknowledge what you have done and see how effective it was. Learning and changing are far more beneficial to you than self-criticising or self-judgment. *Reward yourself appropriately* for what you have accomplished before moving on to repeat the process. If you’ve struggled to get things done in the past adopt a “little and often” approach – lots of small changes can bring about changes quicker and easier than a few big ones!

The **area at the bottom** is called *mood management* and is where many of the hidden barriers lurk.

The good news is that making changes here will have the biggest impact on getting us to perform at our personal best. The not so good news is that they are going to take some effort. By being aware of how we are feeling and the thoughts behind the feelings we can notice

what is going on and begin to make these changes.

➤ **Resistance** to change involves more than just motivating ourselves. It means dealing with the pain of not doing. When the pain of doing nothing outweighs the pain of change then we are mobilized into action – sometimes, any action! This reactive approach is very wasteful in terms of time, energy, and money. – We need to identify **WHAT** we want to do and **WHY** we want to do it, to be able to deal with our resistance in a constructive and proactive way. Remember what we said above under Obstacles to Change.

➤ **Comfort** zones do exactly that – keep us comfortable – away from pain, disappointment, struggle, etc. As long as we *insist* that life shouldn't be uncomfortable we avoid doing things that are in our best interest. Most of the time, we have the basic capabilities to do these things and just need to stretch ourselves to make them happen. Short-term comfort creates long-term discomfort and vice versa! Look back at the Top Tips to help you with this.

➤ **Frustration** as an adult is heavily influenced by childhood conditioning. We have different ways in which we tolerate feelings around decisions, risk, hard work, setbacks, control, involvement, etc. *Often it is the frustration with the feeling rather than the actual task that sabotages us.* Again, Top Tips above will help you.

Visualise going through the middle of the model, step by step as described above, and looking to the left (top of diagram) and right (bottom) of you, identifying your behaviours and emotions, every step of the way.

As we said above, the learning that you go through and what you will do with this learning is at this stage more important than achieving the goal.

When you reach the **Review** step, stop and turn around.

Look back over the steps you have made, one by one, and remind yourself of what worked and what didn't.

Which Excuses did you tell yourself? Others? How did you distract

yourself? When? What was different about the situations when you didn't distract yourself? What were the consequences of your actions/non-actions?

Where did you encounter resistance? When was it stronger? How did you feel differently when there was/wasn't resistance? When were you in your comfort zone? When did you have to step outside it? How did you feel? What thoughts did that feeling create? How did you deal with the emotions and thoughts?

What were your frustrations? How successful were you in recognising that you were frustrated with the feeling, rather than the situation/task? How able were you to tolerate the frustration? What can/will you do differently next time?

Then, while still on Review, take a moment's rest and celebrate what you have achieved (however small it might seem). Beware the Focusing on What's Missing pattern!

Now you are ready to continue with the next three steps – going through the same process, and repeating it until you have achieved your goal. Then start with the next goal.

The more often you follow this Road to Success, the easier it will become, as you get more and more used to achieving your goals, rather than faltering half way. And, as you know

### **Success breeds Success**

Have fun achieving your goals, creating the life you want and getting your business to where you always knew it could be.

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