

upcoach

MAGAZINE

Issue 14 | January 2023

FEATURING

Making the Most of Now

FROM FLAT-OUT
SPARKY TO INSPIRING
ENTREPRENEUR

5
QUICK STEPS TO
Level Up Your
Digital Marketing

BREAKING THE HABIT
OF BEING YOU!!

GROW YOUR BUSINESS
USING SWOT

THE ESSENCE OF
GOOD STRATEGY

FREE BUSINESS ADVICE IN EVERY ISSUE!

“
... you have the ability
to create, sculpt and
shape the year ...

Hello and welcome to the first edition of the Upcoach Magazine for 2023! I hope you're excited about the New Year!

This is the time of the year when business owners are brushing off their New Year hangovers, sporting their new summer tan, and looking ahead at what the year will hold for them.

January is also the month we plan out a calendar for our clients at Upcoach. We take stock of what last year provided and prepare a plan to attack the coming 12 months.

This can be a daunting task, but an exciting one too. I consider looking at 2023 like looking at a blank sheet of paper. You have the ability to create, sculpt and shape the year however you like, so your plan is up to you.

However, there's one critical detail I want to address...

If you CRAVE different/better/more profitable results in 2023, you MUST factor in the element of CHANGE. If you don't Change the way you do things, then how on earth can you expect different results?

This is common sense thinking (I know) however, too many business owners open the doors to their business at the start of a new year and repeat the same actions from the year before.

The same lead generation methods, the same time habits, the same sales process, the same cashflow issues, the same mindset, and so on.

The point is... if you want different results this year, CHANGE REQUIRES CHANGE.

“

... if you want different results this year ...
CHANGE REQUIRES CHANGE.

Chris Herbert
Editor of UPCOACH Magazine



In this edition we explore the essence of good strategy with Gary, we understand how to execute business growth through a SWOT with Geoff, and Nick shares his thoughts on preparing an unbeatable mindset for the year ahead. Our Guest Author - Brody Oxenham shares 5 Steps to improving your digital marketing game in 2023 and we celebrate the journey and success of another inspiring Upcoach Client.

Cheers to the year ahead!

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If you run a business, I'm sure you can agree that managing life and work is much like a juggling act. From sorting the kids for school and daycare to helping customers, to invoicing and ordering, to cooking dinner at night ...

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... reviews and testimonials are essential ...

GUEST AUTHOR



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Breaking the Habit of Being **YOU!!**

**Why Creating Daily Routines
is so Important to the Stability
and Productivity of your
Business in 2023!**

With Nick Psaila

Business is a simple affair when you really think about it. You sell your product or service and get paid for it... that's it. However the truth of the matter is, in between that exchange there are another 1000 moving parts that we need to take care of. The sales process, the transaction, the financial exchange, the delivery, the operation, the staff and the list pretty much goes on and on and on.

Add to this the new era of a social economy and the mesh of global political influences and the simplicity of business may not be that simple any more.

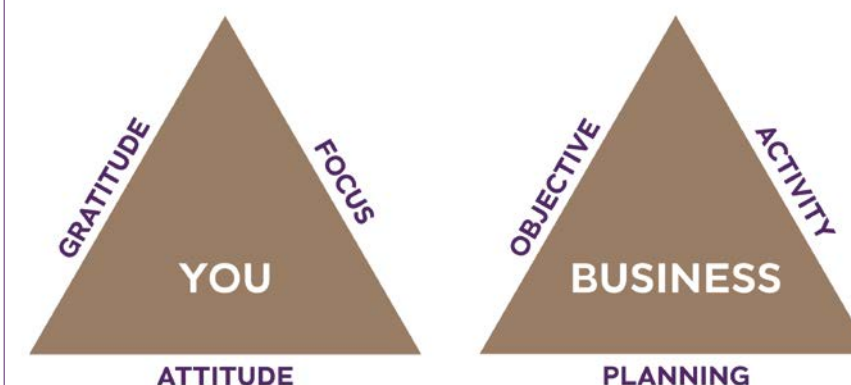
So how do we get back to basics and create a steady keel in your daily, weekly and monthly work week? By bringing simple routines together for both your personal and business life.

Think of routines like a sturdy lighthouse when you're out at sea, or your grandmother's cooking when you're yearning for a simple good old fashioned meal. The lighthouse or grandmas cooking acts like a place you can come back to - that's feels safe, calm and helps to reset your course. So many business owners today are struggling to keep up with the consumer demand and in a post Covid world, fatigue is more prevalent than ever. Its time to reset.

What I'm proposing is simplicity and effectiveness rolled up into one easy to follow daily ritual that you and your team should have no problem implementing. If you want to expand and edit it to suit your liking, well go straight ahead

(I'm not the Alpha and Omega). It's simply an interpretation of what I think a business owner needs, to keep centered and to get shit done...

Here we go....



From the image above, there are TWO parts of this routine.

One pyramid for you (yourself - or personal)

One pyramid for your business self (the business owner - or business).

That way we get the best of both worlds. Now let me give you some context....

... cont. pg 6

The personal routine is based on forming habits that are designed to work the “internal” you, your yin energy (feminine). Now before you go getting all “I don't believe in that stuff” hear me out for a second. What I'm proposing is a way that you can align your mind and heart together to show up as your best self every day. (Without the Navy seals or Anthony Robbins priming and chest pumping shennangins). It's simply 3 easy exercises that help shift your state and get you on track for the day.

1 Gratitude
Think of giving gratitude as a remedy for a hangover cure. It literally snaps you out of a negative state and gets you refocused on what's good in the world. Too often we don't even consider how lucky we are and what “riches” we truly have in our life. I like to wake up in the morning and before I get out of bed just give gratitude to three things in my life. They can be simple things like, “I give gratitude for waking up this morning” OR “I'm grateful for a sunny day”. Or perhaps “I'm grateful for my kids and wife or husband” you get the drill. Just be grateful for the little things. We are truly blessed when you think about it. The fact that you even have a business is pretty amazing!!

2 Attitude
It plays a massive part of not only your business but most importantly your life. It's not what you're dealt, it's what you do with it. So many of us get caught up in a negative attitude which affects and/or infects those around us. Just like it is for a business owner, so too it can be for an employee. Imagine being in the workplace and being grumpy with a poor attitude towards the day, the knock on effects slow down productivity, quality and team morale. One of the most common examples of poor attitude's I have seen is when a team needs to learn a new software or change the way things are done. These attitudes are usually presented by people who fear change. In turn they dig their heels in, affect everyone around them and end up sabotaging the efforts the company is attempting to make towards that change. The simplest way to practice healthy attitudes is to turn that frown upside down and check your attitude at the door. I always like to ask two questions of myself:

- A. What's great about the situation (any situation I'm in or facing)
- B. How can I make it better?

3 Focus
Many entrepreneurs suffer with shiny object syndrome or the inability to focus on one particular thing at a time. I put my hand up for this as well. I believe the reason is that business owners are overloaded with distractions. However, lack of focus comes with a price. You never finish what you start, your mind seems scattered and it's super taxing on your energy. Now reverse the polarity and you come out like a new Rolls Royce out of the showroom ... pristine and ready for cruising. Focus requires practice and over time it's amazing how much calmer you feel and how much more productive you become. Try getting rid of distractions around you and stick to what you do best. Take some of those menial tasks and delegate them to others and focus on dollar productive activities and most importantly good life/work integration.

“
The secret to your future is hidden in your daily routine.

Mike Murdoch

So, it's important to get your inner self right first, before you can attempt to play the business game. So many of us forgo life to dedicate everything we have to the pursuit of business and making money. Interestingly enough, a German Cohort Study on the Sources of Meaning and Their Neurobiological Foundations across four different age groups concluded that of the most important things in life, 90% considered relationship-associated aspects to be very important. Health and well-being were placed second with 65%, and approximately a quarter of respondents mentioned aspects related to a good living environment (28%), leisure time (26%), and work (24%).

So spending quality time giving gratitude, having a good attitude and focusing on what's truly important (i.e. YOU) is the foundation for the smart Entrepreneur.

Now let's move into your daily business routine. There are a thousand approaches to what you can do on a daily basis. I have filtered down what I believe would be the most important, efficient and simplest way to approach the day, week and the year. This is based on your outer self or your yang (masculine) energy.

1 Objective

Routines are super powerful, however they can be super destructive as well. If you get stuck in doing the same/same then you'll pretty much get what you've got. So I want to preface this by saying it's important to get your objectives set out. I like to set objectives for the week. What are the three things I need to accomplish that will lead me to my personal and company goals. Then reverse engineer them into daily objectives.

You get the drill. Set clear objectives and you become so much more productive. It also pays to have a contingency plan. You can bet that “shit happens” occasionally so in order to accomplish your objectives you may need to take a B route.

For Example:

Objective 1. Finalize website content by Friday 7th Dec (being Monday today)

- A. Monday begin topic download
- B. Wednesday complete content and send it to designer
- C. Block out 2 hours for both days
- D. Delegate website meeting to team members...

3 Activity

It's easy as a business owner to be doing literally every single thing in your business regardless of how long the activity takes or the type of activity, big or small. Now if you really looked at some of the tasks you do on a daily basis you would probably find that over 40% of them could have been done quicker and cheaper by someone else. The thing is, most business owners have this thought of either ... if you want something done do it yourself OR I'll just do it to save a few bucks.

For example, if you were to do your book work at 10pm (which most people do for some reason) and you spent three hours on it and your hourly rate was \$85 per hour its roughly cost you \$255. Now you could probably outsource this to a bookkeeper for \$50 per hour (I'm being generous here) which would technically save you three hours of time at night PLUS \$100. Now that's a win/win. The key for the activity is to ensure that you are working on tasks that are as close to your Job Role as possible. The job of the Director is to do exactly that, direct the business, look after the team and most importantly ensure that there is a steady flow of work and income in order to make the business viable. Everything else is probably better off done by someone internal or external to the business. This is the whole reason that most business owners are always running around like crazy and then wonder why they keep having to put out fires.

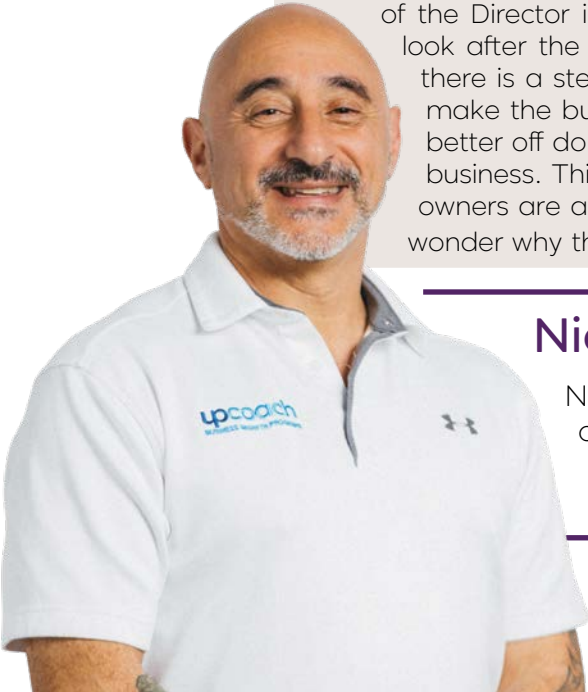
2 Planning / Project Management

Every objective needs to come with a planned approach. Especially if it involves a team. Too many times we take on objectives that are impossible to accomplish due to the fact that organisation is non-existent. Today I believe using software for planning just makes logical sense. You can check out software like Trello.com or Monday.com that can help make life easier.

Now, here is something we don't often consider. Pace - your entire business output is based on pace. You may be speedy gonzales (I know that's old school) or you may be slow and steady wins the race, however you need to understand the time and pace that it takes to get things sorted. No use sprinting in a marathon till the very end.

Business can be either super complicated and a constant headache or it can be really rewarding and inspiring, the choice is yours. The takeaway here is to ensure that you get clear about your objectives, devise a plan to follow and then get stuck in to get what you need done.

Remember you can't be tired enough or scattered enough to do anything productive. Being an entrepreneur isn't for everyone and the ones that embark on the journey know exactly what I'm talking about. So to really get the best out of yourself and the business, start to develop some routines that are fun and easy to follow. I hope this blueprint makes it easy for you to get focused and for you to start seeing greater results!!



Nick Psaila

Nick is the Founder of Upcoach Business Growth Programs. As a celebrated business speaker, coach, thought leader and author of Up-ology and Striking GOLD, Nick has helped thousands of business owners to achieve success.

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Making the Most of Now

How Oliver Saunders went from being a flat-out sparky to an inspiring Entrepreneur.

If you run a business, I'm sure you can agree that managing life and work is much like a juggling act. From sorting the kids for school and daycare to helping customers, to invoicing and ordering, and then cooking dinner at night, every day is action-packed.

... cont. pg 10

“
... this wasn't what running
a business should look like.

For Oliver Saunders, life is no different. With four kids on the go, a thriving business, and weekends dedicated to family, Oliver has cracked the code on the seemingly impossible life/work balancing act. Here's how he does it...

Only a few years ago, Oliver was flat-out, caught up in running his fast-growing electrical contracting business Saunders Electrical Group. (saunderselectricalgroup.com.au)

Being on the tools five to six days a week, plus trying to support a family and do all the bookwork himself, (mainly at night) there wasn't a lot of time left.

Specialising in domestic and residential construction electrical services, Saunders Electrical Group had grown a fantastic reputation in the local Baulkham Hills area in Western Sydney. With the help of his brother (Matty) working on the tools and with one apprentice, Saunders Electrical Group (SEG) had a healthy pipeline of work thanks to their professional service, on-time reliability and commitment to care for their clients.

However, by burning the candle at both ends, Oliver realised that this wasn't what running a business should look like. So he reached out for help.

In under two years, Oliver has transformed the business into a profitable vehicle that has recently allowed him to have a holiday and visit relatives in the UK and explore Greece and Singapore with his young family. The business is run with the support of his wife Lauren as they juggle their four beautiful kids (Spencer, Macey, Harvey and Boston), Oliver laughs



and comments, "They keep me pretty busy when I'm not working!".

Today, SEG looks and runs differently. Oliver mainly spends his time quoting, working on lead generation, managing finances, and upskilling the team. He occasionally jumps on the tools and helps out when he can with his two other tradesmen and two apprentices. Answering the phone and the bookwork is a thing of the past too, as these tasks are now outsourced and the business is completely operated by field service software.

When I asked what Oliver enjoyed most about running SEG, he mentions "It gives me the ability to utilise my time the way I want to. I get to control when I need to work and when I need to be at home".

Financially, it's also fair to say that the business has come leaps and bounds too. With sales growth year vs year of over 23% since 2020, Oliver has also managed to increase net profits by a whopping 186% in that time too. This year the business is on track to do over \$1 million in sales and lift profits even further.

As with any business, Oliver faces his challenges too. During COVID, work almost came to a standstill which affected the business's cash flow. When asked about the most difficult aspect of running an electrical business,



“
... coaching has given me the
knowledge and skills to structure
my business so it can scale properly.”

Oliver mentions, "finding and hiring the right staff is definitely the most challenging part. It's really hard to grow when you can't find the right people".

As I have worked with Oliver over his time at Upcoach, it's been wonderful to witness not only the business transforming but also to see his transition as a business owner and entrepreneur. Initially, racing by as a time-poor and frantic technician, Oliver has listened, broadened his understanding, and applied what we have worked on together to shift himself and the business into the system-driven operation it is today.

A great example of this is when at the beginning of coaching, Oliver applied a time-blocking technique to his weekly calendar and within three weeks was off the tools and getting stuck into working ON his business. These small shifts have allowed the business to move to an entirely different level.

When asked about coaching and what sort of impact it has played on Oliver's business he comments "coaching has given me the knowledge and skills to structure my business so it can scale properly. When I started out, I had no idea about running a business, and after about two and a half years I started to hit a wall and was working ridiculous hours and not spending any time with my family. That was when I reached out for help".

When it comes to sharing his wisdom, Oliver comments that his "best piece of business advice is that you must apply what you learn. Knowledge is useless unless you take action".

One of the most inspiring things about Oliver is that his ambition and drive come from a place of giving. I decided to ask a few more questions to share his story.

So tell me a bit about your background. What brought you here?

Well, I started my apprenticeship in 2005 with a small to medium-sized company doing construction work (apartments and townhouses). I attended Hornsby TAFE and completed my apprenticeship at the end of 2008. In 2010 I joined a bigger electrical company doing some telecom work and solar panel installation.

Then in 2012 I moved to Japan with my brother (Matt) and played Rugby over there. Did some travelling, then came back to Australia in 2015. I got a job working as a technician for an automatic door company and learned how to sell and interact with clients.

... cont. pg 12



“
... my business is
profitable enough to
make an impact.”



It wasn't until 2017 that I decided to start my own electrical business. I saved up about \$15,000 to get myself set up. When I quit my job all I had booked for myself was one job that was about 3 days of work! Over the next couple of months, I was lucky enough to get some work from a couple of other Sparkys I knew. Lauren and I had some savings we lived off for a few months. I didn't pay myself anything for the first six months and re-invested everything I earned back into the business to try to grow. It was a massive struggle!!

What have you personally learned about business while growing Saunders Electrical Group?

I've learned how important good leadership is and having the ability to lead and manage your team well makes a big difference.

I know you give back through your business too. Tell us about that.

Well, one of my most memorable business achievements to date is reaching a point where my business is profitable enough to make an impact. We donate 5% of our net profits to fund nursing education for underprivileged students in the Philippines. We also recently sponsored the Community Defib Project and contributed an AED to be installed in our local community. Having a profitable business allows me to help others as well as provide jobs and create further opportunities in the electrical industry.

What are your long-term business aspirations? And where is the business heading in the future?

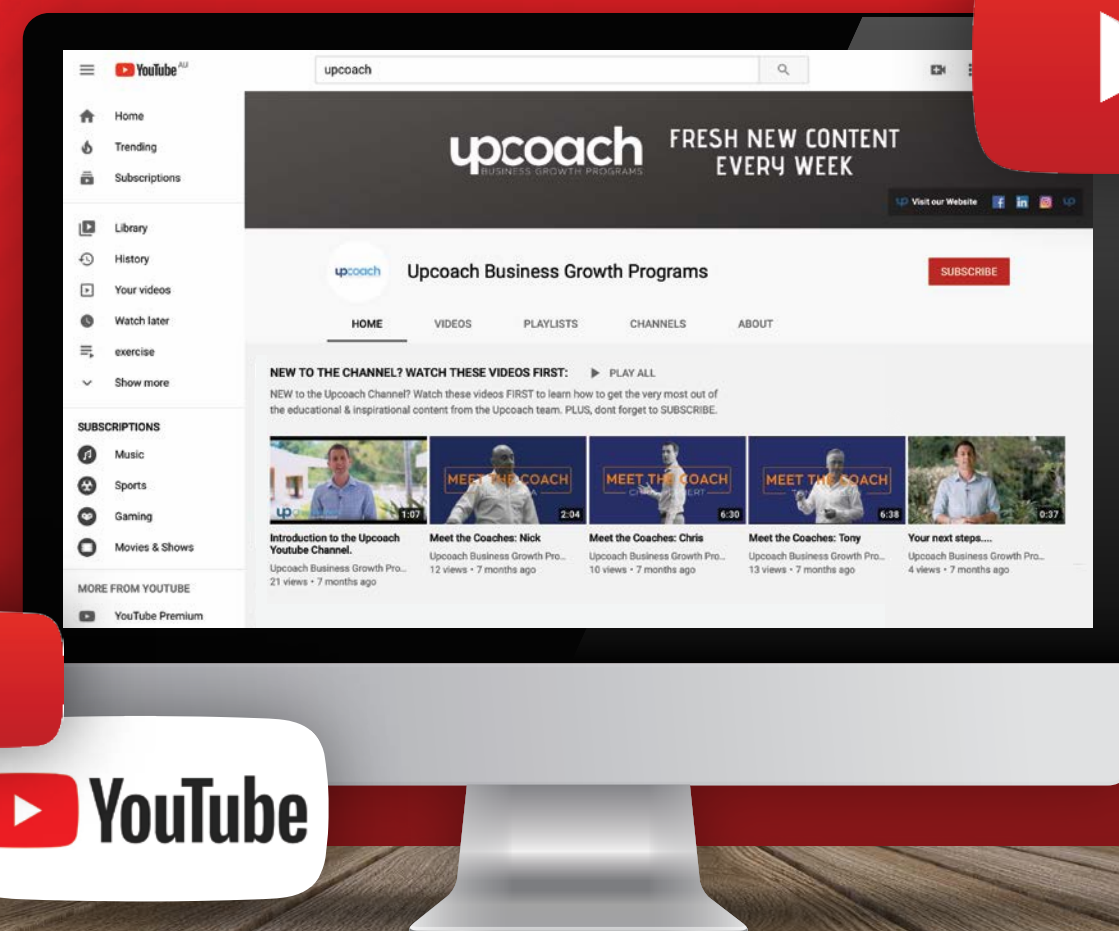
My aim is to grow Saunders Electrical Group into a successful company with a great reputation. Once this main business is running autonomously, I aim to start other businesses and continue to give back to communities and those less fortunate.

My ultimate goal is to grow a successful company that people are proud to be associated with.

Written by Chris Herbert



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5 QUICK STEPS TO Level Up Your Digital Marketing in 2023

One of the most important tasks you have as a business owner is driving sales to your company. The longevity and future of your business relies on that one skill, and understanding what strategies are worth your time and money. Although every business and industry is different, these five steps will help you improve your digital marketing in 2023 ...

STEP 1

REVISIT HOW YOU'RE GENERATING TRAFFIC

Let's keep things simple. Your goal is to be seen online, and drive traffic to your business that converts into happy customers. Typically this is done through paid and organic (unpaid) methods. Instead of all the marketing buzzwords out there, let's keep it simple by looking at these three strategies that are good starting point for a majority of businesses; Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimisation, and Paid Online Advertising. You should be matching these strategies with platforms that your customers are already using. For example, if you're a renovation company, your customers are likely using search engines to discover companies like yours in their area. This means that an effective strategy could be running Paid Advertising to appear at the top of those Google searches, if you have the budget, or working on your Search Engine Optimisation to rank higher organically in those search results.

Social Media Marketing is an organic strategy that involves posting content to platforms your dream customers are using, and building awareness about your business.

Search Engine Optimisation is an organic strategy that involves the process of improving your website and online presence, in order to rank higher in search engine results to get more traffic.

Paid Online Advertising involves paying to run ads on different platforms, in order to get in front of potential customers and drive them to your website, contact you or purchase.

“ ... drive traffic to your business that converts to happy customers.

STEP 2

SETUP & CLAIM YOUR ONLINE LISTINGS

My first recommendation is to review what online listings and profiles you've claimed for your business. You don't have to be posting across every single platform or profile, but it's important to claim them so you can start building out your online presence.

- These listings and profiles may include:
- Search Engine Listings (E.g. Google My Business and Bing Places)
 - Social Media Business Profiles (E.g. Facebook and Instagram Business Pages)
 - Online Business Directories (E.g. Service.com.au, Local Search, Yellow Pages)

There are a number of benefits to claiming these listings and profiles, from building trust to building an online presence and driving traffic to your business. Although this won't necessarily have customers flooding in, it's comparable to setting up your shop front. Without claiming these listings, you won't have a strong presence to begin with. An additional benefit is that this can help with your search engine ranking.

STEP 3

BE PROACTIVE IN GETTING MORE POSITIVE REVIEWS

Online reviews and testimonials are essential to all businesses looking for more customers. They use social proof to quickly convey that you're a legitimate business that delivers great service and results to customers. It seems straightforward, but many businesses don't have a strategy for acquiring more positive reviews. Most just wait passively for their customers to leave a review after the job's done. You still need to be focused on delivering exceptional results, but you should pair this with a proactive strategy for getting more reviews from customers. The best way to do this is to send follow up emails or texts to the customer, and link them directly to where you want them to leave a review. You want this to be recently after they've experienced the results of your work when their positive emotions are still high. Finally, don't be afraid to

“ ... reviews and testimonials are essential ... be selective with sending out these messages. As a business owner you can typically gauge who may or may not have had an overwhelmingly positive experience. If you know someone didn't have the best experience (which I hope isn't the case), hold off on the message as you may just be setting yourself up for a 1 star review. Also, building up a strong number of reviews on a place like Google can once again help with your search engine ranking. ... cont. pg 16





STEP 4

OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE FOR PERFORMANCE & THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Your website is the homebase for your business online.

However, many businesses don't optimise their sites for performance or for generating leads and sales.

If you're putting in all the hard work up front or spending money to generate traffic, but sending it to a poorly performing website, it's all going to waste.

Improving site performance means ensuring that it runs smoothly, loads fast for visitors, and has a professional user experience for them.

You can use Google's PageSpeed Insights to quickly see how well your website ranks in terms of performance (<https://pagespeed.web.dev/>).



Finally, a lot of businesses can improve by adding more credibility to their business through their website.

Include things such as positive reviews, case studies from past customers, any awards you've won, certifications you've received, or industry groups you're a part of.

These can all help showcase why you're the best choice for a customer.

Brody Oxenham

Brody Oxenham is the founder and marketing strategist for Manexo Media, a digital agency that helps clients to scale their companies through digital advertising, lead generation, and social media marketing.

Here are some quick suggestions on how you can improve your site in 2023.

- Make sure your website loads fast (ideally 2-4 seconds).
- Make sure your website is mobile and tablet friendly.
- Have clear navigation menus and make it easy to find information.
- Keep your pages clean. Don't go overboard on text or images.
- Make it as easy as possible for customers to contact you or purchase from you.

STEP 5

FOLLOW UP WITH NEW LEADS & PAST CUSTOMERS

My final recommendation for you this year is to follow-up with your leads and customers.

So many businesses overlook the opportunity to build a relationship with their customers from the moment they first contact you.

If you run a business generating leads, you might already follow-up via a phone call.

However, you could also include a follow-up email or text message sequence that starts educating these leads and supporting them on their customer journey.

An example of this for a renovation company might involve having a sequence of emails over a week that starts sharing tips about the renovation process, what they can expect, and sharing images from previous work you've done.

Firstly, this creates more touchpoints with potential customers and your business, making them more familiar with you.



... don't be afraid to reach out or follow-up with previous customers ...

Plus, it also allows you to frame yourself as a caring and experienced provider in your industry.

Finally, don't be afraid to reach out or follow-up with previous customers either.

Adding value to past clients, even if it's once a quarter, can help keep your business top of mind and remind them of the great experience they had with you.



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“
... see all the
important factors
affecting your
business ...

Grow Your Business using SWOT in 2023

By Geoff Day

If you're looking to grow your business in 2023, one of the fastest ways to do so is by conducting a SWOT analysis.

A SWOT analysis is a simple and super effective tool to assess the internal and external factors affecting your business. It is one of the most widely used business analysis and decision-making tools in large organizations across the world.

So what is SWOT analysis?

SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

It's the start point for strategic planning, and for mapping out your future. It's also an ideal tool to assess projects within your business.

By undertaking a SWOT analysis, you can see all the important factors affecting your business together in one place. It's easy to read, easy to communicate, and easy to create.

A SWOT analysis is a quick and easy technique to examine your business by looking at the *internal* strengths and weaknesses in relation to the *external* opportunities and threats.

Your strengths and weaknesses are factors by which you have some control over, whereas opportunities and threats are commonly driven by external market factors.

Completing a simple SWOT allows you to put things down on paper/digital document and get issues and concerns organised and out of your head. Taking time out to identify the good, the not so good and the bad about your business is a key ongoing business activity and SWOT provides an easy to use technique to manage that process.

A SWOT helps you to quickly;

- S** Identify and build on/leverage your strengths
- W** Identify and minimise/address your weaknesses
- O** Identify and take advantage/capitalise on your opportunities
- T** Identify and overcome/manage your threats

... cont. pg 20

“
... look at
your business
in a new way
and from
different
directions.

Why use SWOT analysis?

Excellent business planning starts with undertaking an assessment of where the business is today.

A SWOT analysis can help you look at your business in a new way and from different directions. A SWOT analysis provides you information to have better insight and understanding into what's working well, and not so well with your current operating strategy.

Conducting a SWOT analysis forces you to think more critically about how well each part of your business is operating, where you can improve, and how you compare against competitors. In essence it's a great tool to help you to create or fine tune your business strategy and prioritise areas for business growth to achieve your business goals.

Business performance is normally measured in financial terms by reviewing actual financial results versus budgets and forecasts. However the benefit and versatility of SWOT is that you can use it to develop new business insights, and shine a light on how your business is currently performing in an operational sense.

Whilst the SWOT technique can be used as a quick 'back of the envelope' assessment, it is far more effective when used in a focused and logical way to evaluate and determine your operational priorities. A SWOT helps you and your team to bring focus when you review and discuss the key information needed for developing focused improvement plans to achieve future goals in your business.

How to perform a SWOT analysis

The outputs from a SWOT analysis are more valuable (and objective) when you involve your team members - employees, advisors, in the SWOT process, as an owner's single perspective may not be complete, or objective.

Make the SWOT a bit of fun and arrange a time to get together with your team to conduct a SWOT brainstorming session. Whilst you should keep your SWOT short and simple, give them some pre SWOT homework and ask them to give pre thought to the SWOT. Encourage the team to voice their opinion on each of the SWOT items. Ideally engage a facilitator, if not establish team safety guidelines - eg no criticism of ideas so people feel it's safe to contribute (particularly in relation to business weaknesses). Aim to get multiple perspectives on your business for your SWOT analysis - where applicable ask for input from your suppliers, customers and partners.

Gather relevant information on the market, client feedback, competitor information etc prior to you the session. The facilitator guides the team through the SWOT process.

“
... start
developing
goals and
strategies ...

Here we go...

List your

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:

The focus is on the present. This is the internal environment inside your business that you can shape. Factors relating to products and services, pricing, costs, quality, people, brand, services, reputation, systems and processes and infrastructure are things to be considered.

Strengths - positive factors within your control.

For example, what do we do well?

Weaknesses - negative factors within your control.

For example, what do we not do well?

Then list

OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS:

The focus is on the future - this is the external environment outside your business. Factors relating to target markets, seasonality, competition, economics, politics, regulation, technology should be considered here,

Opportunities - positive factors out of your control.

For example, what are the big possibilities for us?

Threats - negative factors out of your control.

For example, what could potentially harm us? Higher interest rates, economic downturn.

Once the SWOT brainstorm is completed the group should classify common items under relevant headings eg marketing, client care, quoting, operations. Then it's important to prioritise or rank the SWOT items into high, medium, low in terms of importance to the business.



Geoff Day

Geoff is one of the Business Growth Experts at Upcoach. With years of experience in helping small and large organisations, Geoff assists his clients to face the challenges of growing their businesses and leads them to success.

Once the ranking has been done the next phase of the process can continue - developing/ updating the strategic plan or in the case of project assessment, complete the assessment. Once you have completed your SWOT, you should use the information to start developing goals and strategies that will leverage your organisation's strengths to pursue opportunities, while also addressing identified weaknesses and threats that might undermine your efforts.

In conclusion, SWOT analysis is an effective tool for growing your business. Focus on developing strategies for the top 3-5 items from each area in your SWOT analysis. Clarity of business goals is key - focus on the few items that will "make an impact - the low hanging fruit".

If you'd like more information on conducting a SWOT analysis for your business please contact UpCoach or your coach for the free UpCoach Guide to SWOT Analysis.

The Essence of Good Strategy

By Gary Bigelow

How do you define 'strategy'? What sort of strategic plans do you have in place for your business this year? And why do so many organizations get strategy wrong? Because leaders often do what makes them feel good, whether it helps their company or not.

The book *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy* by Richard Rumelt provides key insights between good and bad strategy. In its simplest form, a good strategy answers three very simple questions: 'why' (diagnosis of the problem), 'what' (guiding policy for action), and 'how' (the actionable objectives themselves). Rumelt calls this the kernel of good strategy. If each stage isn't treated carefully, bad strategy is inevitable.

A good guiding policy tackles the obstacles identified in the diagnosis of a problem through the creation of advantage. Importantly, not all advantage is competitive (in the case of nonprofits or public-policy strategy).

Action points are vital to any good strategy. Companies often lack action points. With President Bush in Iraq, the goal was to invade and conquer. The goals were freedom, democracy, and reconstruction; but the strategy was not implemented until General David Petraeus laid out what must be done to counter an insurgency (something that had not been considered before). General Petraeus' impact was great. This example demonstrates why coherent action must be central to any strategy. "A good strategy does more than urge us forward toward a goal or vision," Rumelt writes. "A good strategy honestly acknowledges the challenges being faced and provides an approach to overcoming them."

Useless 'strategy' has engulfed the psyche of organisations worldwide. Why? **Because good strategy is hard work.** From redundant vision-building to lazy law-of-attraction thinking, people do what makes them feel good, whether it helps their company or not.

Good strategy cannot be stumbled upon by chance. Even some of the world's biggest organisations do strategy poorly, and incorrectly owe their success to their decision-making skill. Conversely, many organisations do strategy expertly, from which much can be learned.

An expert of organisational strategy, Richard Rumelt walks readers around the many landmines lying in wait should leaders misstep in their strategy. At its core, strategy is the identification of critical factors in a situation, then the skilful design of coordinated actions to deal with said factors. It requires awareness of one's resources and capabilities and a sharp understanding of one's industry and its surrounding space. Though there is much to learn, fundamentally strategy is very difficult work, not easily replaced with template-style vision building.

Rumelt first dispels what some believe constitutes strategy. It has little to do with ambition, leadership, vision or the economic

“ Good strategies ... emphasise focus over compromise.

logic of competition. The core of strategy work is "discovering the critical factors of a situation and designing a way of coordinating and focusing actions to deal with those factors."

Bad strategy is not only the absence of good strategy; bad strategy is itself a melting pot of misunderstood or misapplied concepts. Leaders often "mistakenly treat strategy work as an exercise to set goals rather than solve problems."

Going back to one of the companies I highlighted in my last article "If it ain't broke, break it" let's discuss Steve Jobs and Apple's strategic framework.

When Steve Jobs first returned to Apple, he didn't do much that was remarkable. Given Apple's shrinking market share (about 4% of the PC market when he re-joined), he did what any right-thinking strategist would do, according to Rumelt: he made a series of shrewd, necessary business choices that made sense.

Jobs made cuts across the board, simplifying and focusing the company's processes. Jobs took 'focused action', something that is all too rare in business. He first steadied the ship and then stood poised and waited for the perfect opportunity to explode the company into life again.

There were many technologies on the launching pad, and Jobs knew that. Despite Windows-Intel's seemingly insurmountable market lead, Jobs knew that if he made the right decision at the right time, he had a chance to skyrocket Apple to the top. So, he steadied the ship, simplified product selection, made tough but necessary decisions, and waited.

Jobs' strategy was focused, self-aware, and action-oriented throughout. "Good strategy itself is unexpected," Rumelt writes.

“ ... good strategy is hard work.



Well-refined strategic thinking can also guide you in more than just business. I am a sailor of catamarans and never take to the water unless to race, or practice racing. I am always on the water before everyone else observing the course, wind and waves. By the time the 5-minute start warning signal sounds, I have a well-defined strategy for the first leg of the race; where on the line to start, when I will make my first tack and how I will proceed to the first mark. Then I fight hard to get the first step perfectly executed. It is a well-proven strategic approach I learned from books and top sailors that has seen me place Four Championship trophies in the cabinet.

In conclusion, you should work on strategic planning and develop strategy "On purpose", not because someone says it's a good idea, but because it's essential in business. You must also work hard to ensure it is focused on creating success, not just a pretty fantasy of the future. This is true of any venture from which you expect reward.

Gary Bigelow

Gary is one of the Business Growth Experts at Upcoach. With experience in business operations, finance, and management, Gary's no-nonsense and focused approach helps all of his clients achieve success.

So, what was the Jobs formula?

Jobs had an amusing, and incredibly simple, approach to business, which Rumelt, an academic of organisational strategy, loves. It has four stages:

1. Imagine a product that is "insanely great"
2. Assemble a small team of the very best engineers and designers in the world
3. Make the product visually stunning and easy to use, pouring innovation into the user interface
4. Tell the world how cool and trendy the product is with innovative advertising.

Often the greatest business leaders, like Jobs, or Elon Musk, have simple approaches to strategy, even if technically they are complex. "Good strategies are usually 'corner solutions,'" Rumelt writes. "That is, they emphasise focus over compromise."

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