

WORK AS IF **YOU** OWN IT



How to unlock the door to unlimited
success in **commission sales**

KIRSTY SPRAGGON

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5

Take Your Business Further, Faster

Now it's time to ask yourself a really tough question – and answer it honestly. Ready? Ok, here it comes: “What am I not currently doing that I know I should be doing to move my business forward?”

“There are no speed limits on the road to excellence.”

—Anonymous

The chances are that you do know the answer, even if it feels uncomfortable to take 100% personal responsibility for it and admit what you're not doing. For some

reason even when we know what we should be doing and have heard it hundreds of times before in different ways (how crucial it is to do proper goal setting for example) human nature means that for some reason we continue to ignore it.

Whether this is to do with a fear of failure, fear of success, laziness, lack of qualifications, low self-confidence or a hundred million other excuses this chapter is where we get real and get serious about you giving yourself a proper kick up the bum to just get on with it and make it happen. If I can take the shorter, less painful road to success then that's the one I'm taking.

This chapter is about how to get on the fast track through reflecting on where we've been, reviewing where we are heading, knowing the right things to do at the right time and by learning from those who have 'been there, done that' before us.

It's about how we can work smarter not harder so that we can achieve our goals sooner and reap the rewards. Sound good? I thought so.

The Two Roads we Travel

Even though I'm all about speed sometimes I admit I get so caught up in fast tracking myself that I have to remind myself to slow down occasionally and enjoy the journey. I've learned that building a business is a terrific journey of self-discovery if you choose to take a breath along the way to work on yourself as well.

In order to achieve a high level of success and have a balanced quality of life I believe you need to be able to travel two roads at the same time. One road is the personal journey and the other is your business journey and the trick is to get them running simultaneously like two lanes of a dual carriageway.

Along the personal journey you will come across fears, barriers, individual growth, continual learning, challenge and wonderfully exciting and enlightening experiences. On the business journey you will discover all kinds of new skills, knowledge, strategies, tools, 'tricks of the trade' and other business-related challenges to do with time and money. Both roads will change you, shape you and lead ultimately to strength and wisdom - if you remain open to learning. This is the way of personal and professional evolution, transformation and reinvention, and it is a very exciting journey.

Go Within Not Without

As you now know, you are your business and for your business to grow you must also be constantly growing and learning. Make sense? Good.

I have learned the importance of going within and asking myself the questions I need to answer rather than seeking the answers externally. This is because I believe we know ourselves better than anyone else can and so it follows that we often also know what we need; we just need to trust our inner voice.

*"If you do not go within
you go without."*

—Ken Wilber

The danger of seeking advice from external experts is that we tend to put others on a pedestal and not value the wisdom we ourselves bring to the table. What I'm talking about here is learning not to give away your personal power too easily. By all means listen to other people's advice but remember that it is every bit as important to know when to listen to your own.

Call 'Time-Out'

One of the best things you can do for yourself (and therefore your business) is to make taking regular time out to reflect a priority. Now, I know it can feel hard to apply the breaks when you're caught up in being busy. Believe me; I used to have all the same excuses I now hear from others, objections like:

- "How can I possibly take time to reflect when I have clients waiting?"
- "It's not a priority for me to slow down and take stock: I have a zillion things to do"

But I quickly learned the value in taking time out and would like to share it with you here.

It's funny but it's true: sometimes you need to go backwards to move forward faster. If you don't take time out to reflect and review your business, you just won't be able to see where you are going. Like a car driving at high speed, you won't have the necessary warning time to react and avoid dangerous collisions. You need to slow down to arrive sooner, especially if you are swamped in business.

There are times when we all get stuck on the treadmill like a hamster on a wheel. We get so busy that just keeping our head above water and getting through the day's work feels like an exhausting uphill battle. Running things this way isn't healthy and it doesn't allow us to stop and see where we are.

Take Stock for Warp Speed

It's important to pause regularly to take stock in the lifecycle of your business, particularly if you want to grow at warp speed. Make it a conscious priority to stop and take a breath at least every three months. Stick your head up, have a look around and check in on your marketing strategy, implementation, goals and plan of attack.

It pays to resist the temptation to delegate this activity to someone less invested in your business than you are. I strongly suggest this is one activity that you do not outsource but rather take on yourself. If you have a clear strategy of where you are heading and review it every 90 days you will be far more likely to stay on track and meet or exceed your targets. Make it a priority to set this time aside and diarise it at the beginning of the year.

In terms of frequency, one planning day per quarter is a minimum benchmark and one day every month is the ideal. If you leave this time unplanned and just hope it happens then it simply won't, so don't fall into that trap. By scheduling these days in advance and blocking the time out in your diary, you are making a bold statement about how important your business direction is to you and your vision. There is nothing I can say to stress the importance of this enough. It is one of the essential ingredients for taking your business further, faster.

For those of you who think you can't possibly take time off, trust me: the whole world is not going to fall apart without you. At worst you may lose a deal or two but by choosing to invest your time wisely by holding regular planning days, you will change the course of your business and often double your income as a result. Planning days do more than just give clarity on direction, confirmation of current position and how to move ahead in the fastest, most effective way. They also galvanise teams, prioritise accountability and generate new ideas.

I believe that one of the keys to success is having a clear focus of what you want and a clear strategy for how to achieve it. I was forever personally reflecting on my business plan and reviewing

where I was at. Still to this day I constantly think and plan in everything I do. It has become a very lucrative habit. One tip I suggest is use a dictaphone, that way you can kill two birds with one stone by reflecting on your business while you exercise for example. I used to find it really helpful to go out for a run while I spoke my thoughts aloud. I would also use long drives to make notes for my assistant or myself regarding business plans to action later.

I wonder what I used to do years ago before Dictaphones. They are the perfect 24/7 companions. Now every time I think of an idea I can immediately record it. Old-fashioned notepads work just as well of course; it's just a question of cultivating the good habits and taking a few minutes to reflect each day.

Don't just list It, Plan And DO It

It's not enough just to write a list of goals, hide it in a draw somewhere and then hope to achieve them over the course of the next five years. To go fast and hit your targets you need to be reviewing them every 90 days and have a clear strategy in place for how you are going to achieve them. Ask yourself this:

- "What am I working on right now and what are the top five goals I want to focus on achieving over the next 90 days?"

Then:

- break each of these goals down into 1 activity per week for the next 12 weeks
- each goal then has 1 action per week you're going to take towards making it a reality
- 1 activity a week per goal = 5 weekly activities (1 per goal)
- that's just 1 daily activity Monday to Friday – too easy.

It may not sound like much but all those small activities over 90 days are big steps when accumulated. Think how remarkably

different your business would be if you hit all five targets at the end of 90 days. Feeling inspired? I know I am.

Another reason you need to be regularly reviewing where you are at is that your own 'why' or "What's

In It For ME?" may change from time to time. The goals you set 1-5 years ago may no longer be relevant to you. Make sure that you're passionate about them and that they're still exciting you. What you want may change as you achieve your goals or as your life situations and values evolve over time. So keep shifting the goal post and stretching yourself to keep on track and remain inspired. Now let's talk leverage.

"You need to be sure that the destination you are heading to is still the one you want to arrive at."

—Kirsty Spraggon

Leverage

One definition of leverage is: 'doing more with less.' You will most probably have heard of the maxim about 'working smarter not harder' which is a very similar philosophy. Another definition I like describes leverage as: 'the mechanical advantage gained by being in a position to use a lever.' There are four core ways to leverage yourself and your business. These levers are: systems, people, finances and marketing.

In this section I want to look at some of the levers that already exist in your business and how you can use them to leverage yourself to even greater success. One that we have already touched on for example, is using **systems** in your business: processes such as checklists and databases. Systems allow your business to deliver on a consistent and reliable basis, therefore leveraging your time by ensuring that everything runs as smoothly as possible without doubling up or wasting time. By taking the time to do something well in the first place and creating a duplicable system to support it means you're never wasting time and energy recreating the wheel. Eventually such systems will allow your

business to run without you, which equates to a certain quality of freedom most people crave.

Of the four, I'm a strong believer that **people** are the strongest leveraging tool of all. Earlier on I talked about forging genuine relationships and how important this is as a prospecting method. Another great way to leverage people is through sharing in their knowledge. None of us can honestly claim to know it all and we all have something to learn from someone else. I believe everyone can teach us something if we are open to learning.

Top Tip For Taking It To The Next Level

To go to the next level I suggest you consciously surround yourself with new people, skills and resources. Immerse yourself in the world in which you want to be. Start living it. Act as if it's already yours...and it will become so.

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

Why rewrite the book or reinvent the wheel when you could be learning from people who have 'been there done that' instead? A coach in sporting terms is in charge of training an athlete to perform at their best. I remember hearing an interview with an athletic coach who said that, "no one is born a Michael Jordan: he had to train to become Michael Jordan."

Even though Jordan was born with natural ability he still needed to train with an experienced coach to become all that he had the potential to be. The coach went on to say that, "with my knowledge as a coach training anyone like Rocky Balboa for a fight combined with the person's natural ability we become an unstoppable team."

"Working with a business coach speeds up the inevitable when combined with your natural talent and abilities."

—Kirsty Spraggon

The Business of Getting a Great Coach or Mentor

I touched on earlier the value of using mentors in the early stages of your business particularly as they are free. This is great when you are starting out but as soon as you can afford it and you want to take your business to another level then I would highly recommend you start working with a coach.

Like a personal trainer at the gym you won't always love how hard they push you but they will keep you accountable, disciplined and achieving results. This will ensure you get further, faster. By all means avoid the nasty whip cracking grouches out there because if you don't respect them, you won't feel motivated to take action. It's better to engage someone whose business track record and opinions you respect and admire.

A mentor on the other hand is more of a 'wise guide or trusted advisor.' I also heard another definition I liked recently which described a mentor as someone who offers, 'wisdom without the wait'. I have been lucky to have many incredible mentors in my life; even my own father gave me relevant guidance and advice learned through running his own successful business. This really helped me when I was starting out and working through my mindset barriers. Not knowing what to expect or how to feel, sometimes just speaking with someone who had 'been there, done that' really helped.

It is great to continue to have mentors throughout your life, however the added benefit that a coach provides that a mentor does not is that they will keep you accountable and disciplined. Coaches are more results focused and they will assist you to monitor your numbers, check that you have a plan and that you are staying on track towards achieving your targets. My suggestion would be to have both.

Cultivating Collaborative Colleagues

Catching up with colleagues can also be a great source of support and advice. We all have different strengths, which means that we can share different advice with one another and share ideas of what is working for all of us in our businesses. At one stage I needed to work on my conversion rate so I hosted a dinner party for four of my most successful colleagues from the office. We all brought a different issue to the table and helped each other out by sharing ideas and strategies. Thinking like this can really open you up to different solutions and save you so much time. Why waste hours worrying about a problem alone.

Make the Most of Who you Know

You can also leverage through your connections. By building strong relationships with key people you become each other's best grass roots marketing team. When someone recommends your goods or service then 50% of the sale is already done. You gain instant credibility, which makes your job so much easier.

Some of the ways you can leverage your existing relationships to form strategic alliances are:

- **Combined events:** this is a great way to create a win-win situation for you and your partners. For example you could host a client evening about 'Investment' or 'Wealth Creation' and invite your local broker, tax accountant or valuer to guest speak. Not only does this create value for your clients but it also makes you look like an expert while keeping the costs (of speakers) at zero;
- **Sponsorship:** you could have your strategic alliance partners sponsor your events or co-host (and therefore share the costs) some events with you. This opens you up to each other's client databases and therefore creates a much larger network;

- **Create a collaborative Newsletter:** earlier on I mentioned the newsletter I created in conjunction with other local business owners. Joint marketing such as this is a fabulous way to reduce costs and make it more interesting for all of your customers. Rather than six of you doing individual letterbox flyers that just get thrown away, try and come up with something of value that you can create together that will be retained by your target market. The key is brainstorming until you come up with a win-win for every party involved;
- **Leverage off each other's expertise:** for example by creating an e-book in collaboration with an expert on property tax, or a health booklet with the local personal trainer. Once again, it's all about adding value for your client and extending your network through strengthening win-win business alliances;
- **Charity and Community groups:** whenever you hold any sort of function make sure you always form alliances with a local community group or charity you feel strongly about. Raise funds for them through a charity auction or by raffling prizes donated by local business owners. This demonstrates to your clients that you genuinely care and that you are always looking for ways to give back. Community initiatives like this can often open up unexpected opportunities for both you and the charity or group you align with. Clients see what you're doing and want to be a part of it through supporting you. Everybody feels good and it's another 'win-win'...which means you can't go wrong.

Now let's look at some other ways to take your business further faster...

Keep Your Motor Running

It is widely recognised through International research that the key to an individual's success is ongoing training and development.

"Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardour and attended to with diligence."

—*Abigail Adams*

So learn to be a sponge and make sure you attend as many training sessions and conferences as possible to keep on learning and growing.

I have this ability I call 'master implementation' which basically means I can listen to what other

successful people say they do and then just do it. Just like that. No question, no delay, no worry or excuses: I just hear it and I implement it. I sincerely believe this is my greatest secret weapon and would urge you to cultivate the same approach. You can have all the knowledge in the world but it's useless if you're not doing anything with it.

In my own business I would engage a new coach to work with every six months, attend monthly training sessions, book into annual conferences around the world and regularly meet up with colleagues to brainstorm ideas.

Stepping up a Gear

As a business owner you should constantly be asking yourself how you can propel your business forward. One of the most common traits found in successful people is their close attention to detail. You really need to adopt this same attention to detail when you look at each area of your business. Analyse it regularly, always asking yourself, "how can I improve on each part that I'm reviewing?"

There is always a steady stream of new players entering every industry and they will be stepping up their game so you must constantly evolve, adapt and raise the bar. Keeping up to date with the latest trends in your industry and being on the cutting

edge is crucial if you want to be known as a thought leader, not a sheep trailing behind.

Look at what you are currently doing in each key area of your business and review all the ways that you might be able to step it up:

- marketing;
- customer service;
- after-sales follow up;
- presentations;
- financial goals.

One way to check where you could be stepping up is to survey your clients. Ask them to score you from 1 to 10 in each area of your business. If you're not scoring 10 out of 10 ask yourself why and look at how you can step things up. Don't forget to think about what's in it for them in return for them spending their time filling out your survey. Show you value their time, their feedback and their honesty by offering a prize draw or discount off of future goods or service in thanks for their efforts.

You can find a copy of a 'customer survey' on my website in the free resource section under articles.

Go to: www.kirstyspraggon.com

Analyse your Weakest Links

I believe the greatest way to go further, faster is to identify the areas where you are at your weakest. Resist looking for the quick fix or the magic bullet instead of working out what you actually need to put some effort into improving. In order to find your weakest links you will need to analyse each part of the sales process in your business. Assess your business ruthlessly like Gordon Ramsay does when he goes into a restaurant: be as clear, harsh and honest with yourself as you have to be to get to the core of what's really going on. By identifying and repairing your

weakest links it is possible in some cases to as much as double your business turnover so it really is worth doing well.

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

—*Socrates*

We all have personal and professional areas of natural strength but what I’m talking about here is targeting the bits we don’t like to look at as much: our weakest links. It’s important that all your walls are strong – not just the ones you build easily - and that you don’t wait until the dreaded cracks start to appear before you pay proper attention to the structure of your business.

The seven core areas to analyse in order to identify and repair your weakest links are:

1. you
2. prospecting
3. presenting
4. systems and structures
5. your team
6. closing the sale
7. the after-sales experience

Sometimes it can be difficult for us to identify our own weakest links even when we think we’re being objective and trying really hard. This is a good example of where a great mentor or business coach can really be of value because they can offer a broader perspective. Unlike you they are not too close to see what needs to be addressed. The weaknesses may be due to a blockage, barrier, false belief or blind spot that you have, which by their very definition would be hidden from your own view. A third party can often spot any self-sabotaging behaviour a lot more easily than we can ourselves.

Your ‘numbers’ (leads, conversions rate, commission figures) can also be a good indication of where your weak links are. Talk to your colleagues because your numbers alone don’t necessarily mean a lot until you gain a comparison and give them context. Let’s take a look at the seven core areas in more detail and see if you might be able to identify your own weakest links:

1. You

Here I am referring to everything that creates a perception in the market place in regards to you and your brand. This covers all the elements that create a perception around who you are, what you do and how you are seen to be doing it. Including everything from your personal presentation through to the images or photos that you use on your marketing materials.

Three things which impact on this weakest link 'You':

1. Your personal presentation
2. Your body language
3. Your behaviour and attitude

One of the first things to ensure is that you have up to date quality photographs taken. I once heard top sales trainer Darryl Davis comment on sales people using twenty years old glamour shots. He said, "what are you trying to do, scare them when you finally meet?" Using out of date photography will only make you look insecure about who you are today and instil a sense of unease, distrust and deception in your clients on meeting you. Not the feeling you are aiming for. So ask yourself this: what is your photography saying about you and your brand? Hopefully it's not that you look tired and boring. Be yourself as you are today and trust that the right people will want to work with you based on your confidence and honest presentation.

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Under this section also comes addressing your personal presentation (how you dress and take care of your appearance). Take a good look at yourself and imagine what you would think about you if you saw you on the street or in an office: and be honest. It's time to be cruel to be kind here because other people will make a snap decision about you within the first six seconds. These first impressions will influence their opinion of other qualities about you such as: your reliability, professionalism and credibility.

I once had the unfortunate experience of buying a house from a very unprofessional salesperson. He wore tracksuit pants with holes in them, was unshaven and had greasy hair tied back in a ponytail...and to top it all off, he was wearing double plugger

things. Had it not been for the fact that the house was an incredible bargain, I would have run a mile. The salesman was doing his clients a terrible disservice.

So please look closely and see yourself the way the world is seeing you. Sometimes we can be blind to how we are seen, so it's wise to ask someone you trust to give you some feedback on your image, your communication skills and how you come across in general. Ask yourself:

- "Am I reflecting the image and persona I think I am?"
- "What do my photos and marketing material say about me?"
- "Do I look, act and speak the part?"

If the answer to any of these questions is 'no' then it may be time to give yourself an extreme makeover. If you're anything like me this is likely to be an ever-evolving process for you; it is for most people. I learn more and more about what works and what doesn't every single day, so don't panic if you weren't born with the fashion gene either.

2. Prospecting

If prospecting is your weakest link you will know because when you analyse this, you'll find that more than likely you're not

Three things which impact on this weakest link 'Prospecting':

1. Not meeting enough people
2. No systems and pipeline
3. Not offering value

touching enough people. It still astounds me how many people think they can send out a few flyers and meet a couple of people and think that new business will just endlessly roll on in. You need to be connecting with people every

day in lots of different ways for this to be the case. Ask yourself honestly whether you are actively prospecting through all of these methods:

- your marketing campaign;
- making phone calls;

- regular presentation appointments;
- networking strategies;
- other local community or local business affiliations or opportunities.

I was once in a group coaching session with a colleague and the interesting thing we found out was that although we were writing similar figures, I was seeing twice as many people to get the same results. This is how I discovered that my weak link was my conversion rate. My colleague's weak link was prospecting, as he was not getting in front of enough people. So after we helped each other realise this, we both just worked on that one weak link to make it strong and were able to double our incomes.

By looking at our numbers in comparison to one another, we were able to identify which one activity we could do better to achieve maximum business results. I suggest you look at the number of leads you are receiving and find out how many leads the top performer in your company sees and how many they are converting. This will give you perspective on what is achievable. Make sure you are prioritising time to prospect weekly and that you work on creating systems that provide you with a pipeline of new leads consistently.

3. Presenting

This is where we look at your pitch to get the business: your presentation to the client. The best way to identify whether or not you need assistance in this area is to look at your conversion rate. As I mentioned before, this was an area of necessary focus for me. In my opinion, it is also one of the best areas to need work on because you only need to make a few small adjustments to create massive improvements to your bottom line.

Three things which impact on this weakest link 'Presenting':

1. Lack of rapport and communication
2. Not asking the right questions
3. Not asking for the business

I didn't need to see any more people or spend any more money or time than I already was. I was already doing the prospecting to get the meeting. I was spending hours with them presenting. I just needed to increase my conversion rate and get the business – easy. Your conversion rate is your strike rate, it's the measurement that determines how many prospects take your preferred action – to choose you. So I held my dinner party with my colleagues to see what they were doing differently. I read books, watched DVDs, picked numerous people's brains and practised and practised and practised...and then practised some more.

I asked for feedback every time I missed a deal and took on board why I had not been chosen by the client. I worked on perfecting my presentation skills until I got it right. Feedback was crucial to me in this process, particularly as I would often hear clients say they had chosen my competitor for something they could offer, which I also offered but had not communicated clearly enough. Sometimes it was as easy as demonstrating that I was as flexible as my competitor. Don't be afraid to ask why you failed on these occasions and really learn from it. Never be too proud to listen carefully to the feedback. As the Dalai Lama says, "when you lose, don't lose the lesson".

4. Systems and Structures

By systems and structures, I mean the experience that anybody (prospects, clients, past clients, affiliates and so on) has of your

Three things which impact on this weakest link 'Systems and Structures':

1. Not having any
2. Not being effective
3. Not being consistent

business. This refers to the very first phone call to the absolute last point of contact. Ask yourself the following questions about every interaction someone has with your business:

- how are their calls handled?
- is their experience consistent and friendly?

- how do they feel about working with you?
- are their needs being met?
- how are complaints being handled?

Even if you handle ten steps in the process really well but get one wrong, you will lose clients who will simply never come back. For example, if you have an awesome product and you have great customer service but you deliver late consistently, no matter how great you are, you will lose clients. Or if you have fabulous service and deliver early every time but the product is unsatisfactory you will lose clients.

I once had a bad experience with a marketing company. The process up to a certain point had been adequate although by no means outstanding. Whenever I wanted to raise anything for discussion it was taken as a complaint and the owner of the business would get defensive and argue her point with me in two page emails. I have since talked to a couple of other people who have had the same bad experience with this company. Not good because bad news travels fast and there are now quite a few people who won't be recommending their services.

Sometimes you need to go back to basics and adopt that old adage of 'the customer is always right' and learn to bite your tongue. Arguing with clients is a big no-no and will only ever leave them feeling like they are not being heard. Even if you feel better, you won't be feeling richer since they probably won't be doing business with you again. As we saw in the example above, people will talk a lot more about a bad service experience than a good one so you need to be paying attention to what they feed back to you. It would have cost next to nothing for the company I spoke about to let me feel heard and fix my issue. I would have been impressed with their customer relations management and gone away feeling a whole lot more satisfied.

The best way to gain feedback on this weak link is to use the customer surveys I mentioned earlier to gain client feedback.

5. Your Team

If you have an assistant or a team working with you this section may be your weak link. If you have never been a boss before this

Three things which impact on this weakest link 'Your Team':

1. Not delegating
2. Not having clear roles
3. Hiring the wrong people

can be a particularly challenging area. Learning how to work with your team, identifying everyone's role, delegating and making sure things run smoothly can be a huge learning curve. It is also one that is ongoing.

If you choose the wrong team members it can cause a lot of stress, anxiety and confusion for everyone involved - including your client. Your team is a reflection of you and your brand in the marketplace so it is very important to have the right people on board and to ensure they are trained correctly.

For example, if they are selling you poorly you will lose opportunities; if they are handling clients poorly you will lose business; if they are handling your marketing campaign poorly then you will lose credibility and so on. Make sure you really know what your people are and are not doing. We will revisit this area in more detail later in chapter 6 where we will discuss teams.

6. Closing the Sale

In most industries the sale is made at the presentation stage but in some industries like real estate there are two sales:

Three things which impact on this weakest link 'Closing the Sale':

1. Lack of trust
2. No rapport or communication
3. Poor negotiating skills

1. the first is at the presentation stage and is called 'selling yourself' to get the business;
2. the second refers to 'selling the product; the home itself'. This second sale is sometimes referred to as 'closing the sale'. This second stage includes everything from:

- building trust early on with your client
- dealing with buyers
- handling the offers during the sale process
- not to mention presenting the final offer and negotiating the sale

I would like to share a story with you that shows what can happen when you don't work on the right weak link in your business. I was in a mentoring group with a colleague of mine and she was given the advice to market to a farm area. She diligently went off and did this and quickly listed ten properties. Fantastic...however her problem had never been getting the stock - it was closing the sale that was her weakest link. She could get the first sale, it was the second sale "the product sale" she had problems with.

The trouble was that she was just so nice that she never wanted to hurt anybody's feelings, so she constantly 'rescued' the sellers by not making them aware of the severity of the market conditions. This meant that they were never ready to accept an offer. She struggled to sell anything and as her weak link was not being able to close the sale, this effectively meant that she now had ten listings that she couldn't sell and would spend a fortune on in marketing dollars and hours of her time.

If she had only focused on the skills she needed in order to strengthen and improve on her weakest link, then she would have been able to sell those ten properties and make a small fortune. Always remember that before you try and remedy a situation in your business it is crucial to ensure that you are fixing the right problem in the first place. Once again there is a chance your communication skills and rapport-building techniques may also need work on if this is your weakest link.

7. The After-sales Experience

This weak link is self-explanatory and we have already touched on it in previous chapters. Just to recap, in many ways the after-sale experience is the most important part of the whole process

Three things which impact on this weakest link 'The After-sale':

1. Failing to stay in touch
2. No system reminders
3. Failing to update client contact details regularly

to retain customers for life. Messing this up is the number one reason that businesses lose customers because it makes them feel unappreciated. When people pick up on a sense of indifference from you and start to believe that you don't care about them they will soon stop caring about you and your brand. Take

control of this golden opportunity to make a positive, long-lasting impression.

What you do when it's not expected and you're not being paid is what people will remember and talk about. Some of the questions you should be asking yourself to see whether your systems here are effective include:

- "Do I have an after-sales system in place in my business?"
- "Is my database being updated regularly?"
- "Are my clients followed up courteously after every sale?"
- "How do we react if they are dissatisfied in any way?"
- "How effective is our feedback survey and do we advise of actions taken?"
- "How do we diarise ongoing contact?"
- "What system do I have in place to add value to the ongoing relationship?"

Examples of this last point might be hosting an annual client event or sending out a monthly newsletter with special discount offers attached. The real question is: do you have an open ongoing lifetime relationship with your clients?

Reviewing your Weakest Links

In reading through these 7 core areas you may have been able to identify with some of the examples and noticed your own weak links. If you did, that's fantastic. If not, then either you're already a business genius...or else you need some help from a third party

in pinpointing them. Be sure to ask someone you admire and look up to whose professional opinion you respect. They must have high standards themselves in the areas you're analysing or else they won't have the perspective that you need. There are also some specialists out there whose core business it is to help you analyse your weakest links and tackle blind spots (image consultants and marketing specialists for example).

However you choose to do it, make sure you take time to reflect on each of these seven core areas. I guarantee it will help you to go further, faster as you will be working on the **specific area** that needs your attention. And once you fix them and business starts rolling in there will be a whole new set of new challenges for you to work on...

BFOs - Take Your Business Further, Faster

Blinding Flashes of the Obvious

1. Slow Down to Arrive Sooner

Don't get so busy just keeping your head above water that you don't invest the necessary time to stop and evaluate where you are.

2. Take Stock for Warp Speed

It's important to pause regularly to take stock in the lifecycle of your business, particularly if you want to grow at warp speed. Planning days do more than just give clarity on direction, confirmation of current position and how to move ahead in the fastest, most effective way. They also galvanise teams, prioritise accountability and generate new ideas.

3. Don't just list It, Plan and DO It

It's not enough just to write a list of goals, hide it in a draw somewhere and then hope for the best. Ask yourself, "What am I working on right now and what are the next top five goals I want to focus on achieving over the next 90 days?"

"The unexamined life is not worth living."

—Socrates

4. Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

Why rewrite the book, reinvent the wheel or fix what isn't broken when you could be learning from people who have 'been there, done that' instead? Get a coach and get ahead.

5. Analyse your Weakest Links

1. you
2. prospecting
3. presenting
4. systems and structures
5. your team
6. closing the sale
7. the after-sales experience

At some point in our lives most of us have thought about:

being our **OWN BOSS**
working our **OWN HOURS**
making our **OWN CHOICES**

... But few have the courage to make it happen. If you have dared to take the path less travelled and have embraced your entrepreneurial spirit then this is the book for you.

Whether you enter the world of commission sales through real estate, the automotive industry, network marketing, mortgage broking, financial planning, insurance or recruitment (just to name a few) you should be working as if you own the business.

In this practical 'how to' book you will be guided every step of the way from start up to success.

Discover how to:

- ✓ master the transition from employee to entrepreneur
- ✓ identify the beliefs and mindset barriers that may hold you back
- ✓ set up and run like a business with a clear plan & strategy
- ✓ position yourself as an expert and create a perception around your brand
- ✓ master the art of delegation, outsourcing and making the most of your time
- ✓ thrive instead of just survive by planning for the long haul
- ✓ achieve all this while still maintaining balance ... and your sanity



Kirsty Spraggon is a speaker, author and coach who has been there and done it herself. She has been selling for over 15 years in a variety of industries, always at the top of her field. Kirsty ranked in the top 1% of individuals in RE/MAX's global network of 121,000 real estate agents while still managing to enjoy 3 months off every year. She is living proof that you can be hugely successful while still having fun and creating the life you want.

"Whether you're just starting out in sales or you've been in business for years, *Work As If You Own It* is an essential read if your goal is to attain a higher degree of success"

Ivan Misner, New York Times Bestselling Author and Founder of Business Networking International

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