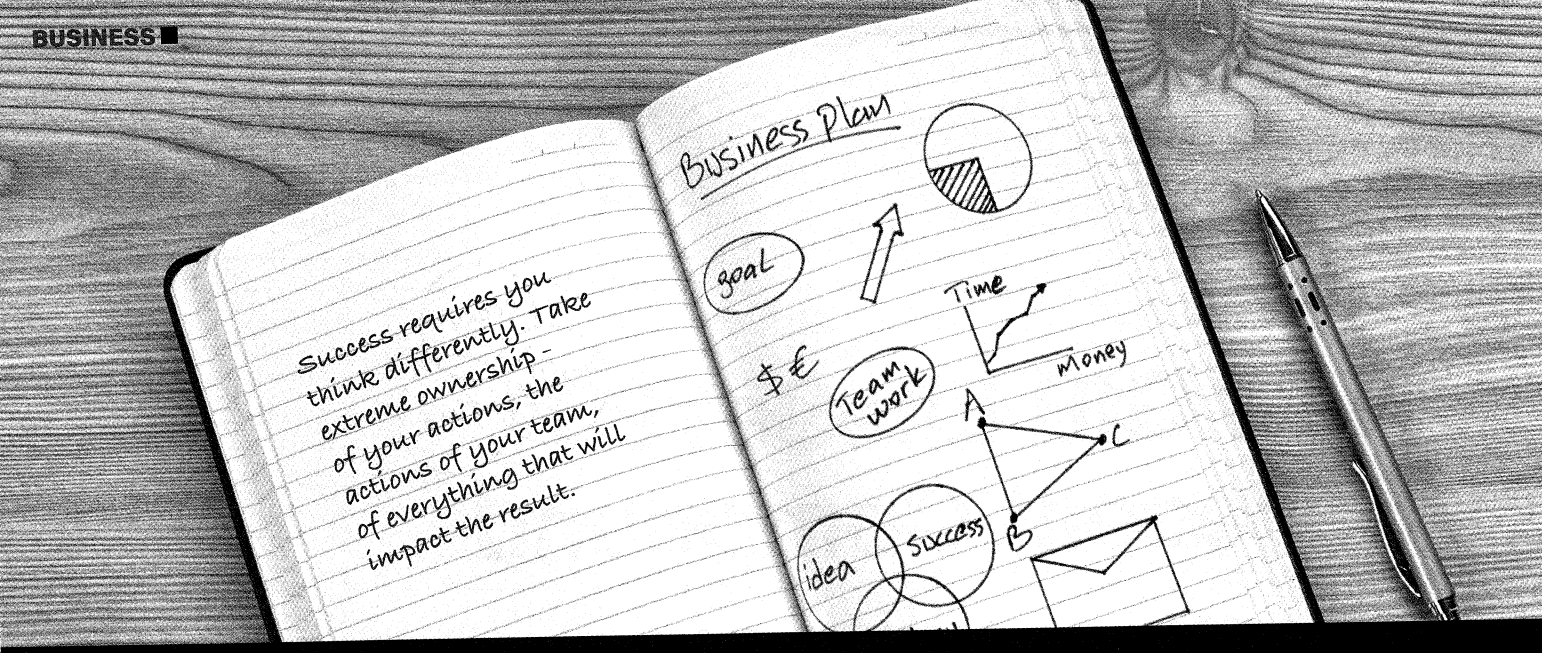


5 mindset shifts you need now

■ BY DANIEL FITZPATRICK, NEXT LEVEL TRADIE

This year has been anything but normal. COVID-19, lockdown, the economy... it might be a bumpy end to 2020. Will things go pear-shaped again in a few months? Who knows. One thing I do know: **Success starts with mindset.**

It's how you can take advantage of any season and come out on top, with a successful business, leaving your competitors in the dust. Or, at least, sleep soundly knowing you've got things fully under control; work lined up, solid income, cash in the bank.

So, what will it take to lead your company through the fallout? **Here are a few tips:**

1 YOU MUST OWN EVERYTHING IN YOUR WORLD

Navy seal Jocko Willink says good leaders don't make excuses. Instead they figure out a way to get things done.

When you're on a mission, there are things you've got control over, and some things you don't.

For example, you don't have control over the weather. If your mission requires a helicopter, but you can't fly, then guess what? You need to find another way - take the Jeep.

Your job is to complete the mission. Even when there are obstacles.

It's easy to point fingers when things don't go to plan. We've all been there. Excuses come to mind; Clients only want the cheapest price. The economy is stuffed. Can't find good staff, they're not out there.

The truth? No matter what situation you find yourself in, you alone are responsible for the success of your business.

Success requires you think differently. Take extreme ownership - of your actions, the actions of your team, of everything that will impact the result.

Control what you can control. Find another way when you can't.

2 WRITE DOWN YOUR FEARS, NOT YOUR GOALS

To achieve your goals, you have to take action toward them. If you're not taking action, then you have to figure out why.

Are there higher-level tasks you've been putting off? It's probably because your brain is telling you those tasks are going to be unpleasant, dangerous, painful, or harmful.

The answer is to get it down on paper. Bring the facts into the cold hard light of day, then you can see exactly what you're dealing with.

Sometimes you've go to look the monster in the eye. Then it's not so bad.

How much did you really make off that last job? What do you owe the IRD. What are your options? Why are you killing yourself to meet that deadline?

I've helped hundreds of tradies find non-scary answers to questions like these.

The worst thing you could do right now is freeze or freak out over every little thing. Instead, make a new rule that you'll address things head on. That way, you can see the danger ahead and avoid it.

3 NO ONE IS BORN WITH BUSINESS SKILLS

If you're like most tradies, your focus is: Work hard. Deliver quality. Do right by clients. Build your reputation.

That's AWESOME, but it's not enough. Because a busy tradie is not always a profitable one.

When giving your price, does it ever feel too high? So, you adjust it down a bit? This is the part where you get stuck working a job there's no money in.

So, what can you do about it? If margins are slipping, cashflow is uncomfortably tight, or staff are making too many mistakes, seek out better methods for getting where you want to be.

Challenge yourself to think more like a business owner to do what's best for the company. Gain a deeper understanding of your numbers. Set up KPIs and targets. Build structure.

Here's the thing: No one is born with all the skills to run a trades business successfully. Business skills need to be taught or learnt.

Ask yourself: "Am I open? Am I actively learning?" Success leaves clues. So, look at others who are successful and work out why.

Consider for a moment: "Who do I have to be, to have the results I want?" Imagine yourself as that person. The best version of you as a business owner.

How you see yourself will always limit your results. When you take action, your subconscious works hard to make the outcome line up with what you're expecting.

So, make sure you see yourself as a highly capable business owner, as well as a highly capable tradie.

4 GRAB OPPORTUNITIES WITH BOTH HANDS

As Kiwis we're always fighting the tendency to lean back, wait and see how things pan out before making a move.

Problem: If you wait too long, you might miss your chance.

My advice is to grab opportunities with both hands. We don't know what's ahead. So, take what you can now. Build your war chest.

Build up everything you need for the tough times ahead. It would be good to have a 'war chest' where there's a financial cushion to allow you to work through any lean periods.

But your war chest is about more than just money. Build your network and customer base. Build skills and processes within your team - make them reliable, efficient, accountable.

Got more work than you can handle? If the numbers stack up, go for it, hire more help. Take bigger and better jobs while they're available.

If things change later, you can always re-adjust. That's business; we're always making adjustments.

First thing is to pay attention. Don't get bogged down. Don't get so busy you can't see what you're missing out on!

Shift your mindset: This is a time to lean IN. Don't be reckless, but actively seek the right opportunities to get ahead.

When nothing is sure, everything is possible.

5 BEING IN BUSINESS IS A WAY TO BUY BACK YOUR TIME

Think of your business as an investment and make decisions accordingly. What kind of return-on-investment are you happy with?

Success has to be on your terms. Being in business for yourself comes with a heap of risk and hard work. You should get a return on your dollar.

It's also about balance. You haven't really attained success until you've got a well-balanced life.

It's easy to slip into the "too busy to take a day off" mentality. Anyone who is self-employed knows the struggle. Lines between work and home are blurred. Everything feels urgent.

Fair enough, but habits have consequences.

It's fine to work massive hours playing catch up...for a while. When weeks turn into months - and months turn into years - it's time to remind yourself why you went into business in the first place, and carve out some time for family.

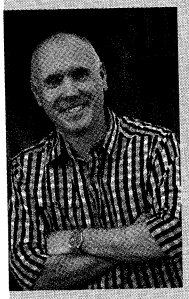
And frankly, for your company to come through this in good shape, YOU need to be in good shape: Healthy, well rested, calm, in control.

Finally, remember this:

YOU'RE AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE. IF YOU RUN A TRADES BUSINESS, YOU ALREADY FACE HUNDREDS OF UNKNOWNS IN DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS. THE REST OF THE WORLD MAY BE FEARFUL - THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT. BUT YOU? YOU'VE LIVED WITH UNCERTAINTY FOR YEARS. YOU WERE MADE FOR UNPREDICTABLE TIMES. YOU LIVE HERE. YOU'VE GOT THIS.



Need to figure out your next move? Let's have a chat to see how I can help: www.nextleveltradie.co.nz/nextstep



NEXT LEVEL TRADIE

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