

How to put down the tools

BY DANIEL FITZPATRICK

It's when you put down the tools that your business starts working for you - so you can work less.

You may feel you are spending too much time on the tools, but you are not quite sure how to step back a bit and let your business work for you, while you actually work less.

Some tradies will happily remain on-site for their entire working career but for some, they want to step back and learn more about being "at the helm."

You may have discovered you can let go for a little while, but soon end up right back where you started. Getting off the tools (and staying off the tools) is not an easy leap to make.

By "on the tools" I mean:

- working on the job alongside the team, getting the work done, or;.
- organising the work - making sure everything runs smoothly onsite, or;
- running around chasing jobs - getting enough work.

Sure, this stuff has to get done, otherwise the business stops. But being on the tools too much means you can't get the important stuff done.

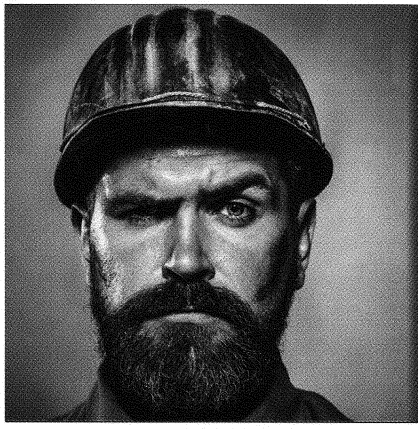
THE THINGS YOU DO TO FIND THE REAL DOLLARS.

THE THINGS YOU DO TO GROW AND EXPAND.

THE THINGS YOU DO TO STREAMLINE YOUR BUSINESS, FREE UP YOUR TIME AND GET YOUR LIFE BACK.

It's a cycle every self-employed tradie gets caught in. Getting out takes effort. But, when you do, everything gets better. Because you now have time to focus on the things that drive





"Great, sounds awesome. But how do I take off the toolbelt?"

profit, so you can make the real money.

The thing is, the captain of the ship can't be below deck; they need to be up top, directing the ship. That's the only real way to get where you want to be, and it also means you can see things coming - so you don't run aground.

If you can master this, you can have the lifestyle you wanted when you first went out on your own. More time to spend with family. More time for you. The time and money to go on holidays (without things turning to chaos in your absence).

"Great, sounds awesome. But how do I take off the toolbelt?"

The most important thing is to keep the standards and the quality of work that YOU have established.

So, you step back slowly - and systematically - while getting your guys to take responsibility.

If you go through this process too quickly or take too big a step, that's where you'll get into trouble and fall back.

Here's how you do it:

1. RECORD:

Write down every part of the job you want to stop doing. Step by step jot down every detail, as if you are teaching someone your job and they are going to do it for the next three months on their own, without you.

2. CHECKLISTS:

Make checklists and staff policies for all of the most important parts that need ticking and signing off at each stage.

3. TRAIN AND DELEGATE:

Hand each part over to one of your team who is now responsible, or get a new team member if you need to. Someone capable of being in charge and being your eyes and ears on the ground. Make sure you train them well so it's a smooth transition.

4. CHECK IN:

Let them get on with it, without interruption. But follow up on their work. Check in with them regularly to make sure they are doing it right. This is key.

5. MOVE ON:

Let go and work on your stuff.

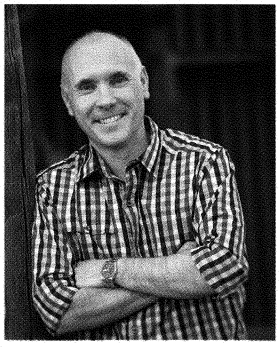
It's really that simple. Not easy! But simple!

Yes, you will have to work hard initially to set this up properly. Anything worthwhile takes commitment, but it's worth it.

The good news is, this strategy is proven and has worked for many others before you. It's always quicker, easier, and far less painful to NOT reinvent the wheel.



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Daniel Fitzpatrick is a business coach and creator of Next Level Tradie, based in North Canterbury. Find out more about him at https://nextleveltradie.co.nz/

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