

# **SUPERCARGED!**

## **UNLOCK YOUR INNER BRAND**



**TURN YOUR UNLIMITED POTENTIAL  
INTO RESULTS YOU CAN BANK**

**META MANAGEMENT**

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# INTRODUCTION

It's your business: your place to shine. You're capable; you know what you are doing and you are good at it. You're motivated; you know what you want to achieve and all the things you will do when you can afford the money and the time. Aren't these – autonomy, ability and motivation – the ingredients for success?

But is your reality different to the business you set out to build? Even when it's not a struggle it's an effort to keep things on track. You put yourself out there to serve your community but most days you spend more time looking after cash flow, staff and chasing after customers who don't really appreciate you.

Unfortunately too many small businesses are doing it tough. The statistics on small business failures is well known. The tragedy is, behind every one of these failures are people: families who sacrificed for the dream; staff who were more than just workers; customers who believed in and supported the business; and you who feel it's you, not the business, which has failed.

The fact is we NEED small businesses. You are the people who choose to do something because you love it, not because some board of directors approved it. You give us an alternative to mass produced products and programmed services that corporates use their power to pay as little as possible for, sell with the highest possible margin but price just low enough to undercut you. You do things to benefit many – even if the results are not immediately obvious and are not the kind of benefits that will ever show up on a balance sheet. When you succeed it's a win for your community, not exorbitant salaries and bonuses for a privileged few.

If you can relate to any of these statements, this eBook is for you. If you have thought to yourself, "Maybe it's time to call it a day", and you have been thinking about this more seriously recently, you need this eBook. In here we will help you understand how you have ended up in this situation and seven steps you can take that will help you to start becoming the owner of the business you were meant to have.

What is an 'inner brand'? Is it some new marketing fad or instant business success formula? There are so many new 'cures' for businesses that aren't growing fast enough or big enough out there, you would be forgiven for thinking this is just another one jumping on the bandwagon.

Except 'inner branding' is not new. If you have some knowledge of marketing or management you may know it by the many components of which it consists: unique selling proposition, core values, core competences, brand equity, organisational culture and competitive advantage. Successful businesses have been using these for decades to establish their market leadership. It is a big reason why the small to medium organisations that do not have dedicated head office and support teams whose sole roles are to focus on the business, usually fall behind their larger competitors.

**We want to show you how you can apply the same knowledge and skills these large, successful companies use so you can have some of their success.**

We call it 'inner branding' because like any other brand, it is how people connect with you. After all, a brand is just values and activities coming together under a distinctive label. By 'inner' brand we mean the foundations of your organisation, the internal elements that, by the way they are designed and developed, determine the quality of that which you deliver to your customers.

Do all organisations need to work on their inner brand to succeed? The answer is 'no', there are three alternatives to growing your inner brand.

**ONE:** You have a monopoly in your industry or area, or an audience so captive that any aversion they may have to your business is overcome by the inconvenience of the alternative. Examples are airport car parks. The lack of options means people use them even when their fees are outrageous. If a monopoly or captive audience is the basis of your business, you can consider your business safe – for now.

**TWO:** You have deep pockets, very deep pockets. You can afford to spend massive amounts on above the line marketing (such as advertising). If customers cannot really tell the difference between the products and services offered, they will opt for brands they recognise. In their minds big brands are a safe choice because companies so big are unlikely to fail, and because customers equate 'familiarity' with 'trustworthiness' (it's how the brain is designed). Insurance companies use this approach; you trust them because you have been repeatedly told (through their advertising) that they are trustworthy and reliable.

**THREE:** You don't really care how you do things as long as the money keeps hitting your pocket. You are the company and the company is you. You make the most of the cash economy, under-report, underpay employees and take shortcuts. Your systems are designed around maximising personal profit so you can 'earn' more (not that it's really your earnings when you help yourself to others' entitlements). If this is you, you can stop reading now as this eBook is not for you (we're surprised you got this far).

For all business owners not covered in the above three descriptions, then this is an eBook for you. It is designed to help you to learn how to use the same knowledge that large organisation use to design their processes, gives you seven steps you can implement to immediately improve your chances of success.

As with all things, the more you practice working on your inner brand, the better you become. The more time you spend on your inner brand the more you will benefit. No business ever grew itself so even if you have limited time, you have never taken a management course in your life and you have an almost non-existent budget to develop your business, you still need to invest in it. This eBook has been designed to make it easy for someone who has limited resources, so as long as you commit to taking the time to follow the steps we suggest you will be taking steps to business success.

## A few things to mention before we start...

In this eBook we use the word 'organisation' to describe your venture as a whole. Even not-for-profit organisations do business, such as receive revenue, report income and provide services, so we use 'business' or 'enterprise' to refer to what your organisation does. By 'organisation' or 'company' we also include sole operators and contractors, who may not have a team, but still need to be organised for business. You can read these terms interchangeably.

When we talk about success, we mean business success. We mean satisfied customers, clients, users, fans, funders and supporters to whom your offering is aimed, and who enable you to achieve your financial and business goals. We are fans of healthy triple bottom lines, so as well as profits, we think success includes making a positive social and environmental impact. We won't lecture – you decide where you stand – but suffice to say that the customers who matter will be the customers who care how you perform in these areas and they will vote with their feet (and what they say on social media).

Finally, of the myriad ways to business success, how did we come up with these seven steps? What we have presented here are not 'secrets' to 'get rich quick'. Because we work with many large national companies, we see the things that give the large corporates the edge over small business. What we have noticed is that the things that make the difference are not that large businesses have more resources – they fail too, only their failures usually don't result in the company closing. We have collated what we have learned over the past twenty years into seven practical steps and adapted them so that small business operators can benefit from the knowledge that large businesses with their easy access to expertise take for granted. We want to make it simple for you to implement the steps that will supercharge your business.

Talk to us any time that you have questions (our contact details are in the front of this publication). If you think others can benefit from what you learn, please share by posting on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/metamanagement](http://www.facebook.com/metamanagement).

*Here's to your success.*





# STEP ONE: IT IS ALL ABOUT YOU

How would you describe your relationship with your business?

*"It rules my world. I am either at work, thinking about work or I take a break from work to fit in other things like my family."*

*"My personal time is precious and rather than build a business that takes over my time I have had to stay small."*

*"I spend too much time on tasks that take me away from building the business, the work I enjoy and the things I am good at."*

*"Once I get to work it's not my time anymore. Everyone needs a piece of me and by the end of the day I am lucky if I have finished even one thing on my to-do list."*

If any of these sound like you and you are UNHAPPY about it, it's time to fix it! It starts with a very simple question.

## Where are you in the business?

What a silly question. You are everywhere and everything from the salesperson to bookkeeper, cleaner to receptionist. But this is not YOU in the business; it's a one-man/one-woman band making up a workforce. Whether it's because you can't afford more help or no one else can do it properly, you are basically hiring yourself as a worker (and probably earning not much more than you would as a worker).

If we take out your efforts, your labour, then where are you in the business? The answer is probably 'nowhere'. You are constantly on the telephone or email or fretting over something that no one else is doing properly but as soon as you are not busy being busy there is no more of you. This is why you find it difficult to describe your business except in terms of what you do in it. This is why you cannot take time off. Instead of ensuring the business reflects 'you', you have made yourself invisible in the business. You are like the

sacrificial lamb who has given yourself up so the business can live.

Being your own 'elite' workforce creates two big barriers to your organisation's success. 1) You cannot scale. 2) You cannot lead.

## Understanding scale

Scale means an organisation is able to expand using its existing resources. Building an organisation that is scalable means it operates effectively to greater capacity without increasing operating costs. A business that is not scalable is inefficient and compensates by stretching its resources to breaking point. It is unable to cope with greater demand so that increased business brings more revenue but results in decreased profits.

You are not scalable. There is only one of you and even if you never take a break you still only have 24 hours in a day. For your business to succeed you need to do more of what is scalable and do much less of what is not. When leaders make what they do their primary focus it does not take long for the organisation to reach its limits of growth and performance. A successful organisation creates a scalable management model. This is why leadership is so important – the culture it creates is scalable because it is effective influencing one, one hundred or one thousand people.

## Leading the organisation

Why do business owners disappear within their own operations? Partially because they have been told "owners should not be the business and businesses are not their owners". This is good advice, but most owners misconstrue its meaning and end up doing exactly that: being at the centre of every decision and function. Getting the wrong end of this advice is only able to create exactly the situation it preaches against because of a pre-existing condition: absence of leadership.

It becomes your vision (we use the word 'vision' cautiously, it being one of the most abused concepts in business, those largely meaningless grand statements that grace many a corporate wall), a feeling that anything that deserves your commitment, your blood, sweat and tears, needs to make a

difference, no matter how small. It comes from your best 'you', a precious part of you that you are willing to use to power your organisation. If you know what this is you can work with purpose. Without it, your organisation is doomed to being mediocre.

**When leaders make what they do their primary focus it does not take long for the organisation to reach its limits of growth and performance.**

Even with a clear vision, many business owners still find it hard to lead.

**1. You are too spent.** A tired, worn, grumpy, stressed and over-stretched person is hardly going to be a source of inspiration and energy vital to a vibrant organisation. Your organisation needs you to take good care of you: a healthy diet, fresh air, staying active, enough sleep, keeping up personal interests and having good emotional support to rely on.

**2. You don't think you are worthy.** Many of us have been conditioned to put others' needs, opinions, attention before their own. Sometimes we have just been led to believe that we are undeserving; there are others smarter, better, more talented, who have sacrificed more. When your business does not fire up, you accept it because you think you were presumptuous to expect any more in the first place. You are wrong. Anyone who takes a risk starting their own business and has a desire to serve others deserves to succeed.



It takes time for meaning and purpose to develop; sometimes it happens progressively as you understand yourself better and grow with the organisation. Then as it develops you can

turn them into the vision that becomes the driving force of a strong organisation.

## Chapter Summary

If you do not take care of you, you are depriving your organisation of its most valuable resource. Everything else you are giving: your skills, your labour and your time are either finite or replaceable. Your unique conception of how you can serve those who matter however is irreplaceable. It is something meaningful that needs to be shared and experienced by others. By using your organisation as the embodiment of your best 'you' it can become extraordinary.



## STEP TWO: TELL YOUR STORY

What do you say when people ask you about your business?

*Do you describe it in apologetic terms? "We're just ... (fill in the blank)."*

*Do you dumb it down?* Instead of letting them know about what is unique about your product or service, you generalise it into its broad industry or category.

*Do you stumble because you can't decide how you should put it?* There's so much to explain and you have not quite yet found the right branding message.

*Do you give a quick answer then change the subject because you don't feel comfortable talking about where your plans are taking you?* It ends up sounding like a sales pitch, or fake and egotistical and that's just not who you are.

If you have trouble describing what you are all about, how can you make it work?!

Humans are story-tellers by nature. Stories elicit different neurological responses to information. They engage us emotionally and invite our participation. A story makes you, the business owner, more likeable, believable, and allows people to see that you are a person just like them, the foundation stone for building trust. Your story is much more than the basis of your marketing; it becomes your organisational culture.

We will talk more about the importance of culture later in this eBook, suffice to say for now that the work you do here will have long range implications for the performance of your employees.

### Story-telling is a craft

It is a craft that anyone can master as long as they have the essential ingredients. A compelling story always starts with a good plot. Plots are necessary for building a strong, believable and cohesive story.

In a good story, the plot is really only understood at the end. A story where you can see what is coming is boring, and can even be an insult to your intelligence. A good plot usually contains three basic ingredients: a main character, conflict and an ending.

1. It needs to be personal. If you are in the food industry, for instance, while saying that good food is about enjoyment is true, it doesn't really mean anything. For some people, watching grass grow is enjoyable too. Your own experience, however, means something. Perhaps food is your connection to your cultural heritage, or how you escape from daily stress.
2. You need emotions. Good stories are based on feelings not events. Most of us remember even the simplest fairy tales from our childhoods because of how they made us feel. You cannot just make up any story because no matter how clever it is, how slick, how well-told, it will sound insincere. Use the feelings from your best 'you' to make your story genuine.
3. You need conviction. It doesn't have to be about changing the world, but it does have to be the sense of purpose and meaning that drives your work. It is focused on the 'B' point, that is, where you want to take people (i.e. going from A to B). More important than your customers knowing what you do, is know what problem you solve, what state you lead them to.

The role of the plot is for you to build your story around it. When Bill Gates shared his vision, "A computer on every desk and in every home" in 1980, *Microsoft* was a small company that wrote software code. Bill Gates' vision was not about computers but his belief in opportunities and how computers would open new possibilities to ordinary people. The *Microsoft* story continues on in its mission statement: At *Microsoft* our *mission* and values are to help people and businesses throughout the world realise their full potential.

Some business owners are so immersed into their own expertise that they try to explain everything to others. The thing is people – your potential customers – do not care about your expertise if they don't first care about your story. We don't describe our business as 'management experts in organisational design for growing performance capability using change management strategies to increase employee engagement and productivity improvement' (confession... we used to until we realised nobody cared). Our business is 'showing businesses how to use the organisation as the source of their competitive advantage'. The first version was

all about us; the second is all about people we work with.

Remember a good plot is tight, short and sharp. A marketable business is one that is easily described in sound bites.

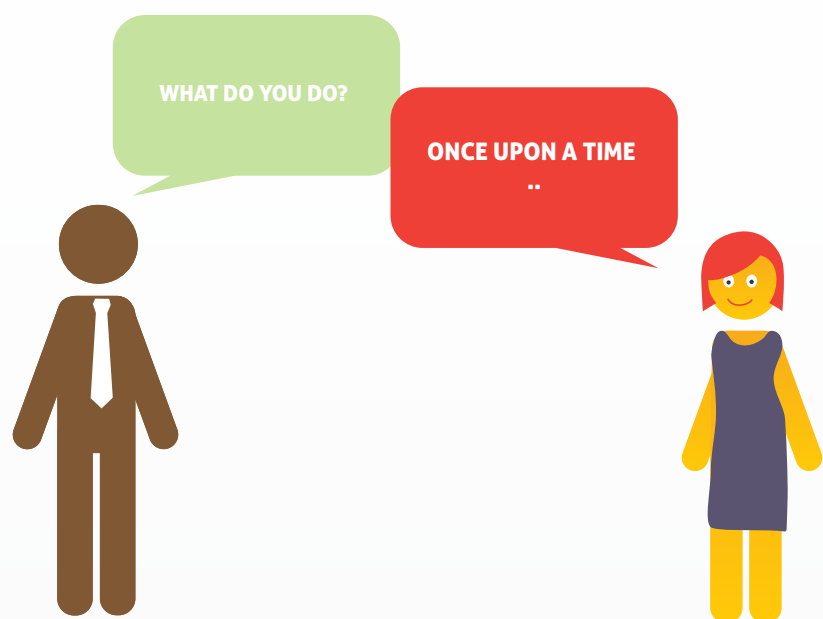
Working in sound bites forces you to think of what you do in terms of where its greatest value lies and to decide who your offering is intended to benefit most. Small business owners can have a tendency to panic that they may be missing opportunities by going too narrow. They develop a spiel that is so general it covers everyone but ends up sounding appealing to no one.

Like any good story, yours may be filled with great characters, sub-plots and exciting chapters, but unless you get the plot right you will continually be floundering with whatever it is you are 'developing', 'trying to be' or 'working towards'. A good story helps you to find your niche, your uniqueness, own it and sell it.



## Chapter Summary

Your story, one that genuinely reflects your personal values, forms the basis of your marketing message. In developing your story sound bites you need to identify what it is that gives greatest value to your customers, and are able to better articulate not only who your customers are, but also who they are not. The story allows you to create an emotional connection necessary for building long term trusting relationships.



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