

The Blueprint

by

Chris Thomason

*The innovative new approach to growth for
the small to medium-sized business*

This book is based on the Sprint for Growth Blueprint; a wall-mounted map that guides you through a process to identify and deliver practical, new opportunities to achieve the growth your business needs. You can get one from: <http://sprintforgrowth.com/blueprint>

Copyright © 2018 Chris Thomason All rights reserved.

Copyright for the content of this book remains with the author. However, permission is granted to allow the sharing of this PDF file providing the content and cover are not changed, shortened or added to in way; the content is shared in its entirety; and the file is not sold in any manner for commercial gain. The use of selected extracts only, will be deemed to be a breach of copyright except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

If you are a business related organisation that would like to have your own branded copy of this file for sharing with your network, then contact the author for more information at Think@IngeniousGrowth.com

Disclaimer: The information contained within this book is strictly for educational purposes. If you wish to apply any of the ideas contained within this book, you are taking full responsibility for your own actions.

Chapter 1 Tuesday morning

Slater stared down at the highly polished, wooden table top in front of her. The dark, oval knot in the otherwise pale panel of wood seemed to move and swirl, like the eye of a hurricane when viewed from space. Many years ago that knot was a small branch sprouting out from the main trunk of a towering tree, reaching out towards the sunlight. Possibly hoping that as it grew, it would later produce seeds, which falling to the ground below would spawn saplings that themselves would grow into more lofty trees.

That was how Slater felt when she'd started her own business—but not anymore. As she shifted her gaze, that knot changed its meaning to her. Now it was simply a blemish on a table top. In fact it was just one of a handful of other knots on the table where she sat, which was, in turn, one table out of twenty others in this, her uncle's café. And his café was just one of a dozen or so other similar eating venues and coffee shops in town.

Would her business end up being just like that knot? A mark in the pages of time where a business had once lived.

A mug of coffee was placed on the table in front of her, obscuring the troublesome knot from view.

“Wake up Slater, I think he's here.” It was Uncle Nick's voice that brought her out of her reverie.

Coffee & Company was the name of Nick's café which he ran with his wife and daughter, and as it was also the closest one to the small industrial unit that Slater used as the base for her business, this was her regular place for a break. Especially as the coffee was good and the food too, whenever she grabbed a bite to eat. Slater liked the place, as beside it being run by family—it was Nick's wife who was actually her auntie—it usually wasn't that busy, which frequently allowed her to strike up a conversation with Nick on whatever interesting topic was in the news that day.

It was a few weeks ago when she'd popped in for her usual coffee and noticed that Nick seemed quieter than normal. She'd become quite close to him over time and felt she knew him well enough to ask if everything was okay. Nick told her that business had declined, especially since one of the big coffee shop chains had opened a store not that far away from his. She knew that the insurance company he'd been working at for many years had closed down their offices in town, and as he didn't have much chance of getting another

job, he'd invested his redundancy money and a good chunk of his pension in setting up his own café some years back, but it was barely making a profit these days.

Slater had then shared her own situation with Nick that day, telling him about how she'd started her own kitchen fitting business three years ago, and how she had vision, excitement and hope about what she was doing. The hope was still there but the vision and excitement had faded as her business just made enough to provide a modest living, but no more.

"I'm good at what I do," said Slater, "and I know that my business could be doing an awful lot better than it currently is. But I'm surprised that *you* say things aren't so good for you. Your coffee and food is really amazing—and your prices are probably the cheapest in town too."

"Thanks," said Nick. "But we just aren't getting enough customers in. That's my problem."

"We're in very different businesses but with very similar problems," mused Slater aloud.

"Have you ever got any advice on how to grow your business?" asked Nick.

"I've read some stuff online but it's all so generic. None of it seemed meaningful to my specific situation," replied Slater.

Nick grunted in agreement, paused, and then said "What if we could find someone to give us some really practical advice?"

"You know someone?"

"No, but I could discretely ask around. Some of my regulars may know someone."

It turned out one of Nick's regulars did know someone.

And this someone had just walked in the door.

Nick led a tall, but otherwise indistinguishable man towards Slater's table. He put the two drinks he was carrying down and introduced Slater to the man, whose name was Zak. They shook hands.

"Zak owns Compleat Home Services—the company that has those bright green vans that we see all around," said Nick.

"I can't take all the credit as I do have a partner in the business" responded Zak with a smile that Slater thought was one of the most genuine smiles she'd ever seen. *I need to practice that* she thought.

“Very kind of you to give up your time to meet with us,” said Slater as the two men sat down. “But can I ask you a question?”

“Of course,” replied Zak.

“I’ve seen your vans before with the name on the side, but haven’t you spelled the word *compleat* wrongly?”

“We get asked that a lot, but it’s the correct spelling as the word *compleat* means highly skilled or accomplished in all aspects. It describes how we try to be in the services we offer. And it also gets conversations started—just like you commented now. Our logo even has that word in a different colour to the other two words in our name so it stands out.”

“And that’s a good thing?” asked Slater.

“If we’re at someone’s house, the adults are often too polite to point out the fact that they think we’ve spelled our name wrong—but kids aren’t. And the first thing our workers are trained to do is to give them one of our business cards.” He handed one from his shirt pocket to both Slater and Nick.

“On the front it has our company details as you’d expect, including what we do. But on the back is the definition of *compleat*.”

They turned the cards over and saw the definition printed there.

“The first thing it does is to provide the tiniest bit of education to the parents. The subtlety is that they are a little bit smarter because of us. The second thing is that ours is probably the first business card that any child has ever received, and as such they talk about it with their parents. Which of course helps to embed ourselves with the parents as potential clients.”

“Neat idea,” said Slater, pocketing the card.

There was a pause in the conversation before Nick spoke.

“Thanks very much for agreeing to meet with us,” he said.

“Well, I couldn’t miss an opportunity like this to learn so much from the two of you, could I?” responded Zak.

Slater and Nick gave each other a look of confusion before Nick spoke hesitatingly “But I thought we were going to be learning from you?”

“All I can do is to tell you some of the things I know. Whether you learn anything from that is entirely up to you. However, if there’s one thing I’ve understood over the past few years, it’s that if you are open-minded and willing, you can learn useful and valuable things from almost anyone. And that’s why I’m here today, to learn from you two.”

“But both our businesses are...” Slater paused and then continued, “*stagnant*.”

“Stagnant?” repeated Zak in an enquiring tone. He looked at Nick, clearly indicating he wanted his input on this.

“Yes. Another word might be *stalled*. We both feel we could be doing a lot better in each of our businesses,” said Nick.

“Better? What do you mean by *better*?” asked Zak.

They both hesitated, not sure what to say.

“I suppose I mean getting more customers so there’s more business coming in,” replied Slater.

“Reducing your prices will definitely get you more business,” replied Zak in a slightly mocking tone.

“That means I’ll have to work harder—and potentially for the same money,” replied Slater.

“What do you mean when you say *harder*? I never understand that word.”

“I mean working more hours in a week,” replied Slater.

“You’re self-employed, so shouldn’t you be willing to do that for the long-term benefit of your business?”

“I suppose so...” said Slater. Her words trailed off as she realised she was getting herself into a loop of confusion.

Slater tried another approach. “I suppose I want to make more money.”

“Wouldn’t working harder do that for you?” said Zak, who smiled the smile again.

Slater realised that she didn’t actually know what she wanted out of her business.

“And what about you, Nick?” asked Zak.

“We are open six days a week as it is, so I don’t want to work longer hours. I just want to get more customers coming here, rather than them going somewhere else.”

“And what are you doing to achieve that?”

“I keep our prices low to compete with the other eating places in town but still try to offer good quality food and drinks.”

“Is that working well for you?”

“We’re just about holding our own and making enough to pay myself, wife and daughter a small wage each week.” He waved a hand in the direction of two women working behind the counter, and continued. “But, I want things to be better for them in the future.” He then waved his other hand around the interior of the café.

“Too many empty tables.”

“You used that word better again,” prompted Zak. “What precisely does that mean for you Nick?”

“More business. But I can’t afford to offer superior food or reduce prices further because I’d start to make a loss otherwise.”

Zak leaned forward over the table and looked at both of them. “You work full-time in your businesses, right?”

Slater and Nick nodded in agreement.

“And you both own your businesses outright don’t you?”

More nods.

“So I imagine your personal and business lives are closely intertwined?”

Even more nods.

“That isn’t necessarily a bad thing by the way. But you are each totally in charge of your business. You could make the decision to close your business down tomorrow or to change into a totally different direction, right?”

“Yes,” agreed Slater and Nick unanimously.

“And you can each decide how your business and work life combine to give you an overall better life, right?”

“Obviously,” answered Slater, beginning to get a little irritated.

“But neither of you can tell me precisely what this *better life* is that you’re looking for,” concluded Zak.

Both of them sat looking at Zak like rabbits caught in the headlights.

“I can see that neither of you are sure what *better* actually means for you, so let me explain. Wanting a better life is a completely meaningless term unless you’ve defined what that means for you personally. In truth, everyone on the planet wants a better life. Many people are employed full-time in jobs that they dislike doing, but they still want a better life. Yet they are unwilling to make a change either because they can’t handle the risks or because it seems like too much work for them to do.”

He took a sip of his coffee.

“You two, on the other hand, have already done the hard thing and made the change to be running your own businesses. And a true owner-manged business has only one purpose—which is to grow. But that’s not just growth around financial goals like sales and profits, but to grow the owner running the business in the way that *they* want to grow.

Whether that's personal development or getting a perfect work-life balance, that's totally up to you."

Zak continued.

"There are any number of reasons why people want to start their own business. Some people make the choice because they want to be in control of their own life in order to create a better work-life balance, or to be their own boss and work the hours that suits them. Maybe it's because it offers financial independence or a brighter future than you'd ever have working for someone else. For some it's to follow a dream or because they want to make a difference to society in what they do. For others, they had no choice. When they lost their employment they were effectively forced to set up their own business."

He took another sip of his coffee.

"Whatever the reason, it has to be part of your definition of what will give you a better life. Before we meet again, I want you both to define what you mean by a *better life*. Does that make sense?"

They nodded in agreement.

"Nick, I know you own and run this café and Slater, all I've been told about you is that you're involved in installing kitchens—so let me ask you both a question. Do you enjoy doing the core part of your respective businesses?"

"Absolutely," replied Slater.

"Definitely," answered Nick.

"And that's normally the case when you run your own business. You do something you enjoy doing. Which means you've just got to identify ways of growing your business by changing some peripheral aspects of the core business that you do. You two aren't just starting out, you have several years of experience under your belt, and hopefully you know what you do well and what you don't do well. But more importantly, the bulk of what you do is right, because that's the core of your business—and that isn't going to change. It's what you are known for and it's obviously working to a degree—but you just need to improve it slightly. To put icing and cherries on top of your cake to make it *better* in some way."

"That makes sense to me," said Nick.

"Me too," added Slater.

"So over the next two weeks I'm going to help you to re-design both your businesses. Agreed?" said Zak more as a statement than a question.

“Agreed. But we should probably talk about money for this,” suggested Slater shyly and looking towards Nick.

“How much are you going to charge me?” asked Zak.

“Surely you’ll be expecting payment from us for this?” said Slater, confused again.

“Let’s agree to learn from each other. Anyway, as my business is bigger than both yours, then I’ll potentially get more value from you than you will from me.”

“At least let us provide the coffee each time,” offered Nick.

“Okay, you’ve got a deal there. We’ll meet here at eight o’clock each morning for the next two weeks. But there’s something else I’ll need from you both—and that’s commitment.”

“In what way?”

“You must have the attitude that you *want to change*. Recognise you have to give something up to make time—because change takes time. You probably can’t give anything up in your daytime as you are busy working in your business. But what will you give up in your personal life in order to make some time to change?”

“How much time do we need for this?”

“About 90-minutes each evening for the next two weeks. But it’s essential you give up something to make the time as a signal to yourself that you’ve made a change. For example give up a bit of time watching television or catching up on social media. It’s up to you, but you have to commit to change. Can you do that?”

“Of course,” replied Slater, “but can I ask you a question?”

“Sure,” Zak replied.

“What are you going to do with things you learn from us?”

Zak laughed.

“I’ll tell you. We’ve agreed that we’re going to re-design your business right? Now, given where you both are, there will be some significant changes to be made to give you a slightly new direction and to help you build momentum in that new direction. However, when you get that momentum, you don’t want to be making any more major changes—you want to be making smaller changes that help increase your required momentum in some way. Have you heard the old adage that you can be too busy working *in* your business that you’ve no time to work *on* your business?”

“Yes.”

“Every month I take a half-day off from working in my business to spend that time working on my business. This is when I consider all the changes I made in the previous month to see how well they’re working and to review all the things I’ve learned over the past month to see what smart changes I could make for the coming month—or longer. This is me constantly improving my business for the coming period.”

“So we’re going to make a plan are we?”

“No. A new business needs to have a plan to keep them on track, and a plan is something that you stick to. You’ve already got a business that’s working to some degree so you don’t need a plan—you’re going to have a Blueprint, which is different.”

“How?” asked Nick.

“A Blueprint allows you to have options to choose from. To do different things in different situations. It’s similar to a plan but without the rigidity as it offers you flexibility. If something works you can immediately do more of it. If something doesn’t work you either stop doing it or change it. Plans don’t offer this flexibility, but a business Blueprint does.”

“So it’s like a map where there are different routes you can take to get to a destination?” suggested Slater, making sure she understood the approach.

“Partly, but with a map the routes are already pre-defined. A blueprint helps you to create your own roads to your own pre-determined destination.”

“So it’s like a map without any roads on?”

“Precisely, and this allows you to create the roads to where you want to go. Some roads will be highways while others will be meandering drives. All totally dependent upon what you want to do and where you want to get to. Some of the roads will develop as you drive along them for you may not be sure what the end-destination is—just that it’s a direction in which you want to go.”

“Interesting,” said Slater. “But how will you use what you learn from us?”

“It’s two weeks until my next Blueprint review and so let’s aim to be finished by then. That will allow me to apply what I’ve learned from you into that review, and it will get you both into a new place without overly burdening your time. Does that make sense?”

They both agreed it did.

“When I review my Blueprint, that’s me trying to work smarter, and not harder. It’s one of the most enjoyable parts of my business too and I’ve come to look forward to this time each month.”

“So what should we be doing first?” asked Nick, keen to get started.

“For our next meeting tomorrow, I want you to think back on why you started your own business in the first place, and to answer these three questions.”

1. If at some stage in the future a business competitor came to you and wanted to buy your business, what would be the successful elements that they would be looking to acquire? Don't focus on the money side of the business; focus on the qualitative aspects that you'd point out to them in order to force them to increase their offer to you.
2. What does 'having a better life' from your business mean for you? Again, don't focus on the monetary aspects, but highlight the quality elements of your work-life balance.
3. And finally, what are some of the things about your business that make you get out of bed in the morning and looking forward to getting to work?

Chapter 2 Tuesday evening

Slater sat at the breakfast bar in her kitchen, absent-mindedly swivelling the seat she sat on from side to side. This was where she tended to do most of her work as the high-level work surface allowed her to be seated on one of the two bar stools, or she could work standing up if she wanted to. She preferred this whenever she was doing her kitchen design sketches.

Slater knew she had a good eye for home interior design, especially for what she thought was the nerve-centre of any house, and that was the kitchen. She'd previously worked in sales for a national DIY chain of stores that offered a fitted kitchen service. She'd go out and show the potential customer brochures of the units and finishes they offered and then she'd measure up the existing kitchen space and prepare a quote for them. If they accepted it, then she made her sales commission when the job was completed.

She'd been the top salesperson in her area as she was able to help the customer understand the benefits that their finished kitchen would deliver to them. She was the only woman in the sales team and while she knew other salesmen talked about how it would look—which was important, of course—she also recognised that the kitchen was a working and socialising area, and she had a good way of including this in her sales pitch. This, she knew, helped her to frequently connect with the woman of the house to understand their ultimate need, and that was how she'd become such a successful salesperson.

Slater also recognised that people still had issues when their kitchen was of a smaller size, and apart from the new-build houses which tended to have larger kitchens, people generally found their kitchens to be too small. And especially so considering the increased number of appliances they had. Unless the people with the smaller kitchens were planning on a building extension, they frequently thought the cost of re-fitting their kitchen was way too high for the extra value they'd get out of it.

She'd always thought that there must be a way to help out these people with small kitchens, and that was why she'd started out on her own a few years ago with the aim to offer a cheaper and more personal service than the bigger kitchen companies. And while she'd got a steady (but low) stream of business, customers still thought the cost was too high for them. Which was why her business was struggling.

But Slater's thinking now wasn't directly about her business. It was around what she wanted to get *from* her business. The *better life* that Zak had focused on. She'd felt slightly

perturbed that she couldn't say precisely what she wanted from her business when Zak had asked her. She thought about this now.

What successful elements of her business would she point out to someone who was interested in buying it so that they'd increase their offer to her?

Some businesses wanted to get loyal customers who were committed to buying from them on an ongoing basis, but with kitchens it was different. For it would be many years before you needed another kitchen refit—so that wasn't of value to her thinking. The phrase 'would you like fries with that' came to mind and she wondered if she could sell another service on top of kitchens—like bathrooms. But who would want to do both their kitchen and bathroom at the same time. Or even close together in time as they were both expensive items to renovate. And she didn't have any experience in bathrooms either—so that was a non-starter.

If someone were interested in buying her business it would be because it was making good profits, which meant she needed to be busy for most of the year. Or it would be because of something that only she could do, or only she had. *But what could that be?*

She decided to move on to the next question.

What does 'having a better life' from your business mean for you? Again, don't focus on the monetary aspects, but highlight the quality elements of your work/life balance.

Slater knew she enjoyed all the different elements of her work. From going to site to meet the customer and to give them her vision of what their kitchen could look like. She could measure up and give the designs to Gerry the carpenter that she worked closely with who'd make all the items. Sometimes she even assisted Gerry to install the kitchen if she wasn't busy and she quite enjoyed that aspect of the business too. She could work from home when she wanted to, doing the quotations and the designs, or she could work from the little office in the small workshop unit she rented to store all her materials in. So for her, there was flexibility in how and where she worked and she thought she could have a good work-life balance however successful her business became.

Let's look at the last question, she thought.

And finally, what are some of the things about your business that make you get out of bed in the morning and looking forward to getting to work?

As she'd been thinking through these questions she realised she'd been absentmindedly sketching on the paper in front of her. It was a corner cupboard with a double-hinged door. She enjoyed sketching and was quite artistic with a pen in her hand. She loved the design process where she incorporated some innovative new space-saving device into her designs, as customers were always excited to hear about it—and even more thrilled when they actually saw it installed as an integral part of their new kitchen. She realised that she truly enjoyed the front parts of the entire design and installation process that she was good at, as Gerry could handle all the manufacturing and actual fitting. And she knew that he enjoyed that part of the work too—so it suited both of them.

If she was honest, it was the designing work that really excited her. Looking at an existing kitchen and visualising how it could be better and more efficient to suit the needs of the owner. She started to realise that it wasn't so much the designing of an entirely new kitchen from scratch, but the re-design where she had to apply clever ideas to make the best use of existing spaces. That was the really fun part for her. But if only there was more work coming in...

That same evening in Nick's study.

Nick was pondering the same three questions that Zak had asked them earlier that day. They seemed like obvious questions that should have obvious answers, and Nick was a little uneasy that he couldn't answer two of them. The first question about a getting a potential buyer of the business to raise their offer was more straightforward. For Nick, he realised that he would have to tell the potential buyer how he had regular customers who he knew by name. For if his café was busy for most of the time, then there wasn't much more he could do. And in a town like theirs, it was all about getting regular customers rather than trying to appeal to the once-off passing trade.

Zak's second question had been around *What does having a better life from your business mean?*

One of Nick's hobbies was coffee. When he was younger, he'd spent a few years in the Royal Navy and had toured the world and sampled coffee from so many different countries he'd lost count. When he'd left the navy and joined the insurance company, his love of coffee continued and he'd always had coffee making devices of some kind in his home. From a simple coffee percolator, to a Turkish copper cezve for making the intense Eastern coffee, to a French press and moka pot, and eventually a fancy espresso machine. He'd experimented with different beans from around the world too. And now that he could order beans from anywhere via the internet, he'd sampled some really interesting coffees. He'd even got a small coffee roaster so he could buy green coffee beans and roast them himself. He'd started flavouring his beans as he roasted them and even he had to admit that his hazelnut-roasted Colombian Arabica beans produced an amazing cup of coffee. It was what he was sipping now as he pondered Zak's questions.

Nick, his wife and daughter were a very close family and they'd always talked about doing something together someday. Nick's wife Alicia was a sensational cook at home, and her food was never overly fancy, but always extremely tasty. He'd often joked to Alicia that with her cooking and his love of coffee, they should open a café together. And when he lost his job at the insurance company, that's what they did.

After his daughter left school, she'd completed a course at the local college on food nutrition and computer studies. He'd asked Alicia what sort of strange combination that was and what she'd do with it to get a job. She'd told him that it was what their daughter wanted to do and so they shouldn't interfere. It turned out that his daughter *had* struggled to get a job and so she'd joined them in the café. This wasn't a problem for Nick as they needed the extra help, and they all got on well together, so it made things quite enjoyable during the day to be working in their own family business.

It had taken a sizeable amount of money to lease and fit out the premises and he was desperate for it to be a success as Alicia was younger than him and he was keen that she would have a source of income if anything ever happened to him. He knew that he wasn't the healthiest person and so he had to be planning for his family for the future. And this all summed up what having a better life meant for him. It was about Coffee & Company being successful and providing a fair income for the three of them.

Zak's final question concerned the things about your business that made you get out of bed in the morning and look forward to your work. For Nick, it was about having regular customers, for he was the chatty type and loved making his customers feel special. In his time at the insurance company he'd discovered that he was excellent at remembering names and

faces, which now stood him in good stead with recalling the regular customers in his café. But he knew that regular customers didn't always want to eat and drink the same thing. So he'd always thought it would be essential to offer new and varied items on the menu to keep appealing to them. This way a first time customer would return again and again, and so become a regular.

This appealed to Nick. He imagined himself speaking with his regulars, and making recommendations from the menu on the day's speciality coffee he'd be offering or on the dish-of-the-day Alicia had added to the menu. That was the sort of thing that he'd really look forward to. *Surely that would help to create more regulars and increase profits?*

He absentmindedly swirled the coffee in his mug and the hazelnut aroma this action released stimulated him into action. He began to write down his answers to Zak's questions in his notebook...

Chapter 3 Wednesday morning

They stood on the corner of Church Street and High Street, which was nominally the centre of their town, watching the early morning traffic perform a sadly-repetitive dance in tune with the changing colours of the traffic lights.

Zak had sent a peculiar text message the night before explaining there were some potential customers he wanted them to see, and that their meeting venue had changed to be this road junction.

“Do you know what *better* means for you now?” he asked as he drew close to them.

They nodded, and greeted him.

“Good, you can tell me while we walk,” and he set off at a brisk pace along Church Street.

Slater started. “Your first question was around why someone would see value in what my business does. There are numerous companies who make kitchens and many people who install them, but I know I’ve got a good eye and can design a kitchen that a house owner will fall in love with. I believe that my work could even win a regional design award as it’s much better than some of the previous winners I’ve seen. So, I would be the reason that people would want to pay more for my business—for the awards that my designs win.”

“That’s ambitious and I like it. What about you Nick?” asked Zak.

“I’m very different,” started Nick hesitantly. “I don’t think I could win any awards, but I will be recognised for the speciality coffees we offer alongside our regular drinks. My self-roasted beans will be something that makes our coffee stand out. Also, my wife’s own recipes that will be our speciality cakes and dishes. The other thing will be the fact that our coffee shop is located a bit further away from the centre of town but close to two schools and the business areas. If I could build up more regular customers then these will be the reasons that my business will have greater value.”

“You roast your own beans?” asked Zak.

“Coffee has been my hobby for years,” said Nick.

“You should try his hazelnut-roasted coffee,” prompted Slater.

“I will,” answered Zak. “You say that you don’t think you could win awards. But don’t you realise when you get a regular customer, then they are awarding you with their custom—and paying you for it at the same time?”

“I’ve never thought about it that way,” replied Nick.

“That’s an informal award as opposed to Slater’s formal one. But both can be equally as valuable depending on how you use them,” said Zak. “What about the second question around making a better life for yourself?”

“Having a steady income is important of course, but the most important thing is flexibility in when we work. Because there’s my wife and daughter working with me, we would have the flexibility to take time off whenever we needed to—or wanted to—and still leave my daughter in charge. Whether it was doing something for the business, going on holiday, or even when one of us just wasn’t feeling well, it’s knowing that there are enough of us to cover the running of the business, and still have someone you can trust completely to be in charge. That means I’m not a slave to my business.” Nick’s head was nodding slowly and he had a slight smile on his face as he spoke about his ideal future.

“Not being a slave to your business—I like that. If you’re not careful that can easily happen,” commented Zak.

“For me,” continued Slater, “it’s about being able to outsource all the manufacturing and installation work so I can focus on the design work and meeting clients. I can do my designs and costings from anywhere—home, office, even Uncle Nick’s café. And at any time too, as I have the flexibility to do my designs at night or at weekends, and to take time off during the week if I wanted to. Better is about being in full control of my work-life balance.”

“You both mentioned flexibility and that’s a key benefit of running a small business but it can be a curse too. Some people don’t know how to handle this flexibility. They either try to do too much and don’t focus on what they need to focus on, or they get bogged down in too much trivial detail.”

They paused while the traffic passed and then crossed the road. Slater noticed they were heading towards the carpark of the main supermarket in town.

“What about my final question of why you get out of bed in the morning?”

Slater started. “I love what I do. And your three questions helped me to understand this—so thanks for that,” she said nodding to Zak. “Knowing that when I have to design something very special for a client to fit within all the constraints they have of space, shape and budget—I really enjoy doing that. Even more so if I were to get some recognition for it—like an award or something.”

“For me, and my wife too, we’ve created a special café that we’ve fitted out and decorated in our own way. Actually it’s my wife’s way—but I like it a lot. Coffee & Company is a place we all look forward to going to each morning as the background music

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

