

FREEDOM MACHINE

HOW TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS
RUN LIKE A WELL-OILED
MACHINE WITHOUT YOU

Kerry Anne
NELSON

Foreword by Dale Beaumont

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Foreword

As the founder and CEO of Business Blueprint, my personal mission is to help as many people as possible build the business of their dreams. My workshops and conferences show entrepreneurs the tools and strategies they can implement to go from where they are to where they want to be.

You will always find me encouraging business owners to take control of their systems and processes. Without this essential element of good business management, owners find themselves completely trapped. The inner workings of their business are all in their heads and the moment they're not physically present, things begin to fall apart.

When staff don't have systems and processes to follow, they feel lost and overwhelmed. Everyone is doing things a different way, money is plummeting through the cracks and time is wasted. Despite this, it's amazing to hear that over 85% of businesses have no instruction manuals, training videos or established ways of doing things.

I've witnessed first-hand the incredible difference that systems and processes can make to smooth out operations, improve staff morale and turn the profit wheel in the right direction. It may take some time to get started, but the return on investment is game-changing.

The problem is, when you're busy with everything else, implementing systems can feel overwhelming. This is why Kerry Anne Nelson's book is an amazing asset to hold onto.

Having overcome some of the most difficult struggles an individual has to face, Kerry Anne reversed her own fortunes from near-bankruptcy to streamlined success. In teaching herself to rebuild her business from the ground up, she realised she had a higher calling.

Not content to keep what she has learned to herself, Kerry Anne decided to show other business owners the exact steps to structure their organisation, define roles, create instruction manuals and develop better routines with this book.

Drawing on the energy and zest that the title Freedom Machine evokes, Kerry Anne delves into the details of exactly why systems and processes are essential for every organisation. In this publication, you'll find flow chart examples and technology tips to make implementing systems easier. You'll also learn how to assign responsibility and KPIs so your systems aren't left on a shelf to gather dust.

I first met Kerry Anne a number of years ago when she attended one of my live events to find out how to organise and grow her business. Her warm smile and infectious personality immediately stood out but as I got to know her I came to see a deeper and more thoughtful individual. Kerry Anne, as I have learnt, is immensely positive, talented and inventive. She also possesses a rare ability to share her ideas so they are easy to understand.

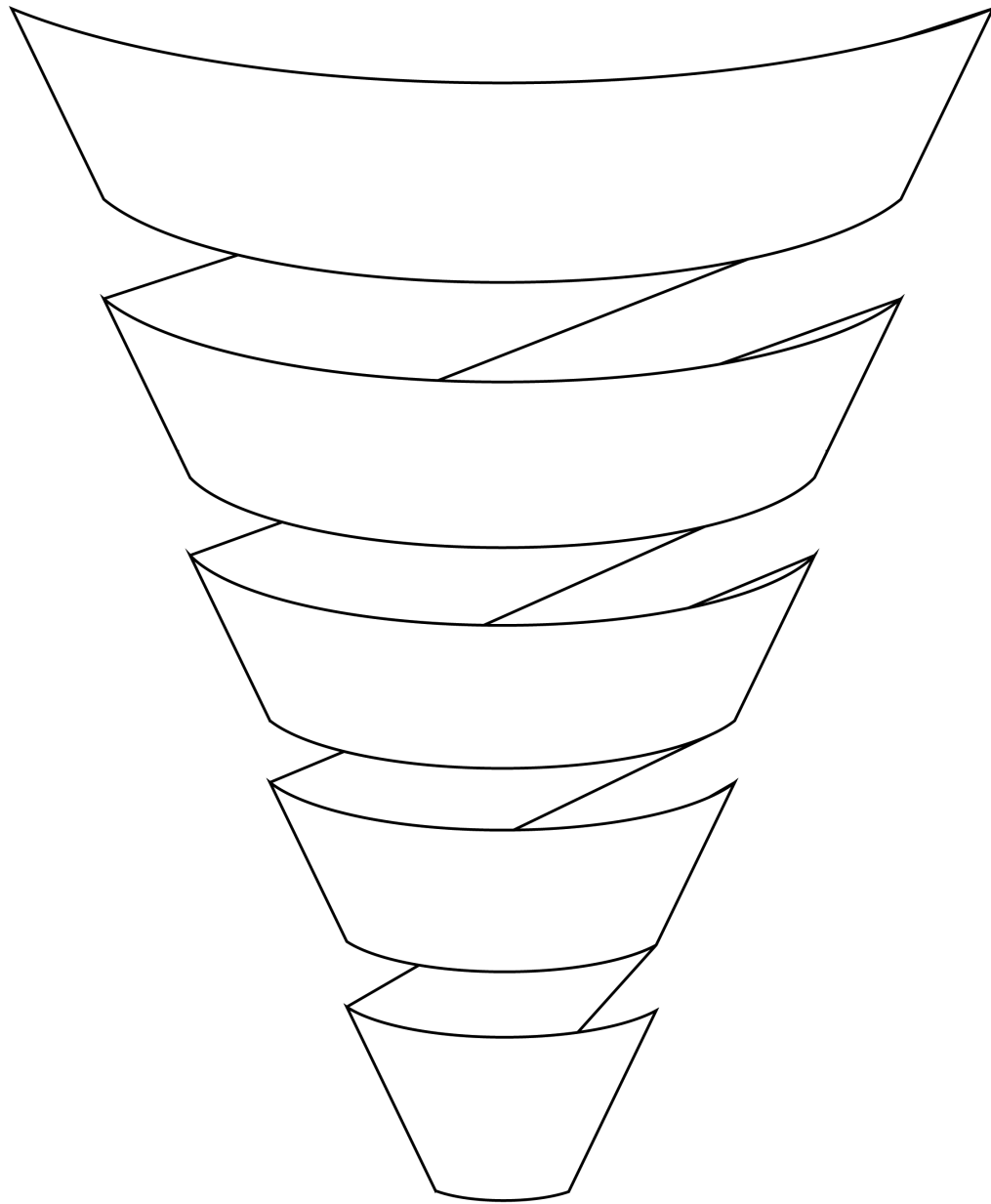
I've been endlessly impressed with Kerry Anne's achievements and drive to pass on her knowledge. It is no surprise to me that she has been able to channel her energy and vision into this book.

You'll find Freedom Machine to be one of the most helpful resources for developing systems and processes you can get your hands on. Keep it close, refer to it often and take the steps that are recommended as you read.

Remember: the more you learn, the more you earn. Freedom Machine is the short cut you need to understand and implement systems and processes. Commit to making a positive change and your efforts will take your business to new heights.

Dale Beaumont

Business Educator, Speaker, Entrepreneur and Author



Journey To Creating A Freedom Machine

'Without ambition one starts nothing. Without work one finishes nothing. The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it.'

Ralph Waldo Emerson

This entrepreneurial game is captivating. For some, it's purely the money that drives them, with the pursuit of business growth being tied directly to the profit that comes with it. For others, the entrepreneurial journey is about the quality time with family and loved ones that a healthy business can bring. Others love to travel so they build their business to fund a string of deeply fulfilling adventures at home and abroad. It might be the creation of a legacy that motivates you, or the insatiable desire for expansion and influence that keeps you coming back for more. Whatever it is that floats your freedom boat, I suspect you will recognise yourself in the following passage.

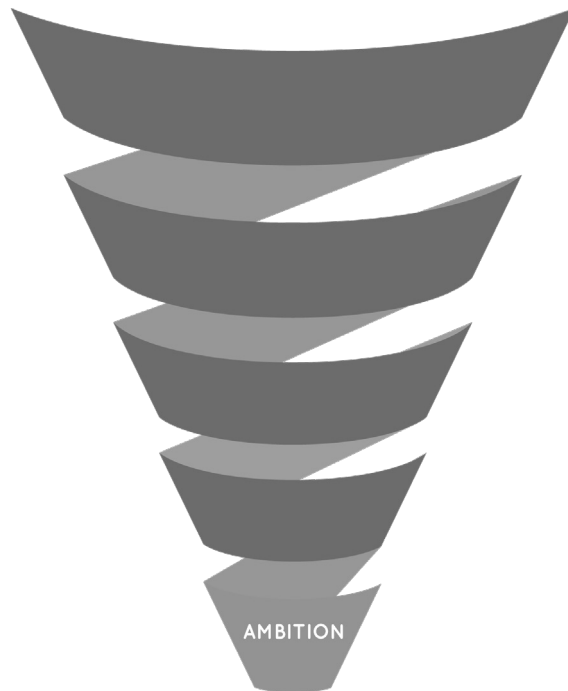
The journey of business growth will look like this if you are chasing freedom with your business. There are five distinct phases to grow through:

PHASE 1: AMBITION

'A person who sees a problem is a human being; a person who finds a solution is visionary; and the person who goes out and does something about it is an entrepreneur.'

Naveen Jain

The relentless drive for freedom is consistent for the business owner captivated by the entrepreneurial spirit. The ambitious start-up is fueled daily by the dream of lifestyle choices that will become reality as the operation becomes increasingly independent. These start-ups might look the same as others in their early days, but if you scratch a little beneath the surface, you will find someone on a mission to build something that can grow exponentially without them being tied to all the work. From their humble beginnings, they have no doubt they will expand nationally and even globally to roll out their business offering far and wide. Their early days are marked by passion and fueled by intention.



Experiencing success as an entrepreneur is a must for those compelled to action in business. For highly motivated and ambitious business builders, failure is not an option, or at least it is never final. It is inconceivable that any situation would result in stepping down from the mission. The passion the entrepreneur has for their operation starts with their vision and is activated daily in the comings and goings of life.

Here are five lessons to be learned from the entrepreneur on an ambitious business mission:

VOICE CARRIES VISION

Everything the entrepreneurial visionary says is alive with the fullness of their vision. They know the creative power of their words and they use it to full advantage, bringing forth new opportunity, creating change, making connections and communicating vision simply by speaking these things out. Words are not wasted or used lightly, but invested into significance and achievement. Look out for the entrepreneur who speaks, reads, writes and listens to the language of success ... they are making their own reality come to life!

TEAMS ARE TRANSFORMED

The entrepreneur turning their vision into reality knows that it cannot be done alone, so they invest in equipping and empowering those around them, bringing them onboard with the vision. The people working with the successful entrepreneur are encouraged to embrace more than simply showing up from 9 to 5. Their time is valued, their contribution is recognised as significant, and they are shown they make a real difference. They're rewarded for excellent performance and encouraged to contribute their unique genius.

ACTION FOLLOWS AMBITION

Entrepreneurs put their money where their mouth is, working tirelessly to walk the talk. They have little tolerance for hot air and idealism, because building their business demands real action with real outcomes. They're not only busy but productive and effective, rallying

resources and pursuing progress with focused determination. Dreams become goals, and goals become plans scheduled with deadlines. The entrepreneur in flow is amazing. Project to project, task to task, moment to moment, always targeting the end game.

STEPS ARE STRATEGISED

Rising entrepreneurs have an uncanny knack of connecting micro moments with macro missions. They start with the end in mind and continue on in kind, every step strategically planned to contribute to business growth. When the unexpected happens, the entrepreneur is flexible without sacrifice. Creative solutions to unforeseen circumstances unearth greater resilience, new learning and opportunities for gain. Every business owner is busy, but the entrepreneur has laser sharp focus on achieving their aims no matter what happens.

PRAGMATISM BALANCES PASSION

Above all else, the entrepreneurs to look out for are the ones who understand that grand visions only come to life when the bottom line is profitable and lucrative. Problems are opportunities for growth only if they are solved. Failure carries the seed of success only with persistence.

Business owners on a mission to build something bigger than themselves know that superhuman outcomes can be achieved by ordinary humans who are trained well, using systems that function like a well-oiled machine. Any business is only successful if it is profitable, and the entrepreneur rallies every resource and directs every moment to the pursuit of this aim.

'If you want something you've never had, you must be willing to do something you have never done.'

Thomas Jefferson

Daily life is filled with evidence of 'success'. Studies estimate the internet alone showers us with over five thousand shiny advertisements each day across 1.9 billion websites. Consumers watch 3.3 billion YouTube videos daily to learn from the internet of everything. 3.3 billion active Facebook users upload over 350 million images per day and watch over 100 million hours of video.

It is astounding that even in this age of print media decline, 12.5 million Australians still turned the glossy pages of their favourite magazines just last year. There are thirty-six millionaires in the world who collectively own almost half of the world's wealth. In 2016, only nine Australian companies made it to the Fortune 500 list.

If we believed the media, successful entrepreneurship looks public, glamorous, sexy and most of all, easy. But research consistently proves that the myths surrounding the attributes of the most successful entrepreneurs are rarely founded in truth. American author, keynote speaker, angel investor and entrepreneur Tim Fargo shares pearls of wisdom for us to heed: 'Don't envy what people have, emulate what they did to have it.'

Here are five qualities of the world's most successful entrepreneurs that just might surprise you:

FREEDOM OVER FORTUNE

Jim Austin from ScienceMag.com tells us that the entrepreneur's greatest motivator is not their fortune, but their freedom. They are driven to build their empires primarily to enjoy the lifestyle choices that come from having a wealth of social, financial and material resource at their disposal. The entrepreneur pursues their autonomy above all else, with their greatest ambition being to enjoy their independence because they have ultimate control over what they do, and a business freedom machine to fund it all.

For You: Nurture your spirit of freedom by finding ways to delegate the work that needs to be done in your business, but not necessarily by you.

MEANING OVER MONEY

'I like to be involved in things that change the world.'

Elon Musk

While studies prove that the general population measures success by their educational achievements, annual income, quality of their relationships or their levels of personal health and wellness, most entrepreneurs value their involvement in making a significant contribution. For the world's most successful entrepreneurs, they find the deepest satisfaction in pursuits that actually mean something and make a difference in the world.

For You: Step back from your busy days to ensure your own routine allows time and space for contributing to something bigger than yourself.

RETURNS OVER RISK

There is a common misconception that the entrepreneurs who make it big have a penchant for throwing caution to the wind, but research shows us this is not the case. While entrepreneurs will take calculated risks, these bold moves are measured against the potential for making the biggest possible return.

The vast majority of entrepreneurs will jump in to the next big adventure only when they know the chance of success is relatively high, and they always ensure they leverage the full value of their current opportunities.

For You: Invest time in streamlining your current business processes to establish a position of certainty and predictability before you launch out into your next business venture.

POSITIVITY OVER PESSIMISM

Having an ever so slightly embellished view of yourself and your abilities is something that comes in very handy for the successful entrepreneur, who tends to see themselves and their potential for success as more significant than it actually is. This means that successful entrepreneurs enjoy the psychological benefits of positive self-talk, optimism and high expectations. They live the high life of self-fulfilling prophecy, where they believe so much in their own ability to succeed that it actually happens.

For You: Build positive affirmations and celebrations into your regular schedule to maximise the highs that come from winning and the expectation that these wins will come more frequently.

COLLABORATION OVER COMPETITION

While the successful entrepreneur likes to dominate the marketplace and strives to gain the winning edge over their competitor, they do so with an inherent value of collaborative relationships which facilitate mutual gain and allow them to maximise the relationships they have with people in their circle. They also foster this approach in the development of their company culture, knowing the best performance comes from employees who have a sense of belonging in their workplace, and enjoy the rewards of positive, supportive collegial relationships.

For You: Seek out strategic alliances with people who will enjoy their own wins by helping you get to where you are going, and champion collaborative contributions at every level of your business operations.

PHASE 2: PRISONER

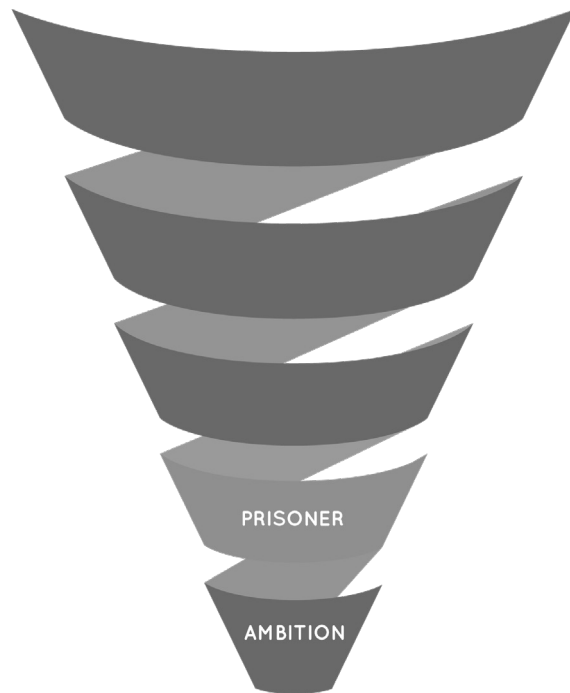
'Some people dream of success, while others get up every morning and make it happen.'

Wayne Huizenga

This ambitious entrepreneur works quickly to activate their growth. From the first days of starting up they work to chase more sales, develop new products or packages, expand the footprint of their business, and strategically create new opportunities at every turn. It doesn't take too long for this success to become a noose around their neck, with increasing customers, more stock and administrative mayhem all placing impossible demands on the entrepreneur. This part of the growth phase is painful, but passing. It changes when the business owner admits two things - not only can they not do everything themselves; they simply don't want to.

There is nothing more exciting than starting a new business, but if you're an entrepreneur you'll know the thrill of the launch is often followed by the real life sting that it's not always smooth sailing. Every successful entrepreneur has survived their start-up days by being determined to make it through the bottlenecks of their business growth. When I reflect on my own business building experiences, I can relate to what the research shows and what my clients report - that in the pursuit of freedom there are times where you feel like you have become a prisoner of your business.

Studies show that many entrepreneurs leave the security of employment to enjoy being more hands-on in their work, to experience more variety, to fulfil their burning 'why' and pursue their passion. But the research is loud and clear about the driver that most entrepreneurs share - a



desire for freedom. They want to have more autonomy in what they do, when they do it and how they do it.

For this inspiring majority, their greatest business reward will be to enjoy the liberty of making their own lifestyle choices.

Here are three battles every successful entrepreneur has won to break free of their start-up business prison:

I NEED MORE TIME!

Studies everywhere show the owners of SMEs work long hours often without breaks. While the general Australian public currently enjoys working fewer hours than they ever have before, the reverse is true for the majority of entrepreneurs. 68% of owner managers report working more than 50 hours per week, with 10% of all business owners working more than 75 hours per week. I read recently that small business owners work longer hours than professionals such as doctors and lawyers.

Entrepreneurs are familiar with the real life implications of these confronting stats. When your business consumes the vast majority of your waking hours, you're forced to miss your child's school play, or you work late into the night to catch up on what you missed when you were battling your way through the Mummy and Daddy chit chats with the other parents from school. You started work early to make it to your wedding anniversary dinner only to be too exhausted to engage properly in conversation with the one you love most. There's the anxiety of sleepless nights and the knowledge that you simply don't have time to look after your most valuable asset: You!

I NEED LESS WORK!

Right across the board entrepreneurs are shown to be multiskilled individuals who take pride in keeping all the balls up in the air at once. They typically resist being pigeonholed into a single role or task, and move fluidly to meet the demands of their growing business. According to a 2017 study, the vast majority of entrepreneurs see themselves as passionate, driven and creative. Another study published in 2015 shows entrepreneurs to be responsive innovators who value a fast solution

over a perfect one. Entrepreneurs can do anything and everything, and they do!

While these are essential attributes for the business owner in pursuit of success, their competence, intelligence and ability to multitask can often be their greatest liability. While the entrepreneur is still working to get out of their business prison, they do the work of the receptionist, the bookkeeper, the strategist, the full IT department and the entire sales team. They run at a million miles per hour and their mind races with information, analysis and fast decisions. They need to grow through this “Jack Of All Trades” phase by mastering their business leadership. Do you remember those days? Perhaps you are still in them.

I NEED SOME HELP!

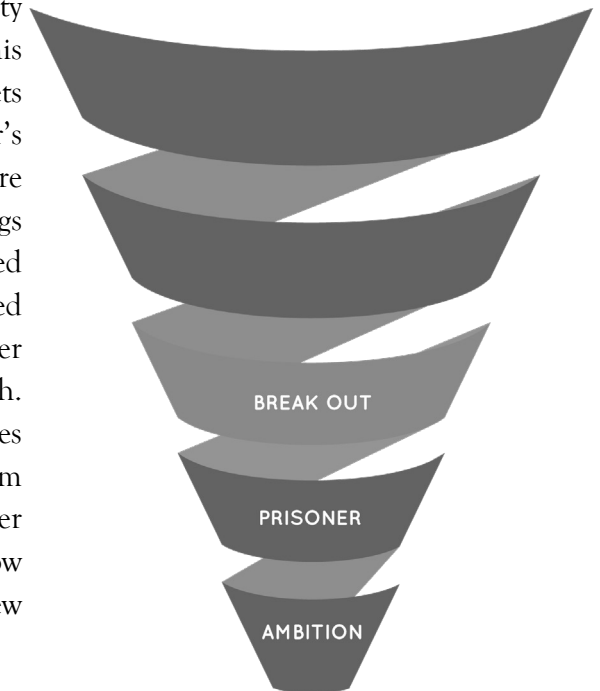
In 2016 the Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman reported that the size of a business has a direct bearing on their likelihood of survival. The bigger the business, the greater success it will have. If your business doesn't have staff, it is more likely to fail than any other. The successful entrepreneur doesn't take too long to mobilise their team. From their perspective, getting more hands on deck is the essential step to ensuring their business enlivens their passion and rewards them with freedom.

For years I have said that your breaking point is your making point. The successful entrepreneur stretches to the very limits of their capacity, increasing their sales, expanding their market reach and building their systems as they go. Some have always wanted to build a team and lead their people, while others are more pragmatic about the need to add staff. Whatever the case, the entrepreneur knows they can't continue to be all things to all people if they are going to build a business that runs without them. Breaking out of that business prison relies on their ability to recruit and train high quality staff to invest into their business growth.

If you are still battling it out in the trenches, keep up the good fight! There is light at the end of the tunnel I assure you, and it starts with learning how to systemise, delegate, automate and outsource the work that needs to be done, but not necessarily by you.

PHASE 3: BREAKOUT

The ambitious entrepreneur's chase for business freedom changes gears permanently when they take the bold step to get the help they need. Whether they put on a new assistant, outsource some of their operations, recruit some trainees or interns, or inspire some volunteer helpers, there is no turning back for this business now. The personal relief to the ambitious entrepreneur is almost as delicious as the new surge of productivity which results from this operational shift. It whets the business owner's appetite for more. More hands on deck brings more time, increased productivity, extended reach and/or a greater capacity for growth. The entrepreneur loves the break away from their old sole-trader prison, and they throw themselves at the new surge with abandon.



'The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.'

Chinese proverb

Making it through to the wide open spaces of business success is much easier said than done. The stats around business failure play like a broken record right through the media. You already know two thirds

of Australian businesses won't make it through their first three years. The real question is, how can your business story be different? How can you create a business that reaches out to make a real impact in the marketplace, offers a safe and rewarding workplace for your team, and leverages your efforts to fulfill your ambitions of freedom, wealth, legacy and passion?

Growing my own business and helping others grow theirs has shown me that there are some in-house basics that need to be established to create the sort of business all entrepreneurs dream of. ASIC tells us that businesses fail because they lack strategic management, keep poor records, face expenses they can't meet and don't generate enough cashflow. Logic tells me the first two lead directly to the second two. If you don't manage your business strategically, this shortfall will show up on your bottom line.

These three steps to business growth are like rites of passage that every entrepreneur must move through to experience lasting success. Cycling through these three strategic management phases in every part of your business will relieve the growing pains of every successful business:

SYSTEMISE

The statistics around the systemising of business processes paint a dismal picture. Over 85% of businesses don't have their routine processes documented, which results in 40% of workplace productivity being lost in transitions between tasks, and 17% of work time being spent by employees simply looking for stuff they can't find. There are no shortcuts here if you are playing a long game in your business. If you want to develop a resilient, robust operation, it is essential that you get organised now. You should have started yesterday, but you can start today.

Here are five things you can commence this week to establish more order and control in your business:

1. Clear out your inbox and physically write up email management rules to prevent the backlog from ever building up again.

2. Organise your calendar and actually write down your time management guidelines so you never feel like you don't have enough time.
3. Develop one centralised filing system based on the key departments of your business and invest time in sorting out your business records.
4. Start documenting exactly how your routine business tasks are completed each day to unlock all of that business intellectual property (IP) currently hidden inside your head.
5. Create flow charts, templates, planners, checklists and systems to streamline the completion of creative or arbitrary tasks like staff training, content creation, product development, client care and advertising campaigns.

DELEGATE

The reason it's so important to systemise your business by documenting your workplace processes can be summed up in one word: delegation. The only way your business can run without you whilst expanding is if you have more hands on deck. Every single entrepreneur who has made it through to the big leagues knew that they couldn't go it alone. In 2016 the Australian Small Business Ombudsman reported this simple equation: the bigger the team, the greater your chance of success. Make it a priority to set up your on-boarding processes so you can start bringing on additional help as soon as possible.

There are plenty of resourceful ways you can do this, but here are five of the best:

1. Recruit volunteer help. You probably have a friend or family member who could help with some of your basic work tasks like answering the phone or running errands, or an expert friend that you could trade skills with.
2. Take on interns. Some of your routine work could complement the skillset and ambitions of an intern who can help you for a day or two per week while they gain professional experience and earn your recommendation.

3. Virtual assistants. It is very likely that you have volumes of work in administration, design, content creation or basic bookkeeping that you can pass on to a virtual assistant, either offshore or right here in Australia.
4. In-house employees. The work you have to pass on may well need to be done by someone on site, so look at employing your own staff, whether it be on a casual, part-time or full-time basis.
5. Outsourced services. Tasks which are done best by experts should be removed from the entrepreneur's desk and put firmly into the hands of a third party supplier. There are so many specialist companies providing dedicated services that there is almost no need for you to do anything at all in your business except drive the strategic growth plan.

AUTOMATE

Every successful entrepreneur knows their thumb doesn't need to be in every single business pie. Recent research suggests that by 2030, robots could occupy 38% of jobs in the U.S. economy. There are websites, software programs, applications and devices that will help you streamline almost everything that needs to be done in your business. Researching options then investing in new technology is the fastest way to sustainable growth. Ask around your networks and spend some quality time with Google to find electronic solutions to your unique workflow problems – just make sure you ask yourself these five questions before you jump in:

1. Do you need it? Jumping on the technology bandwagon for its own sake is a waste of time, money and headspace. The tools you invest in should provide a real solution to a genuine problem you have in your business.
2. Does it work? The description on the box and in the ad sounds fabulous, but make sure that the technology you install has user reviews to show it works in situations like yours. Ask your tech friends and your website developer if this really is a good tool.

3. Do you know how it works? The demo video makes this technology look like child's play, but to ensure success you must be certain you will have the training resources and support you need to actually implement it in your workplace.
4. Will it do what you need? The only way you can know if a new tool will meet your needs is if you have a crystal clear understanding of what you need before you look for tools. This is another vital benefit of documenting your process first.
5. Is it scalable? The best tool for one or two won't necessarily be best for ten or fifteen, so take a close look at its capacity first. Tech changes quickly so don't expect a tool to last forever, but at least find something to serve your next few seasons.

I just love this business of business growth, and I am constantly inspired by the blood, sweat and tears that entrepreneurs invest into the journey. Three cheers to the champions of the entrepreneurial spirit! Here's to the soldiers who started out with ambitious dreams and took on the world by betting their plan was a good one, and by admitting that their big dream was so important they just couldn't let go. If you've been at it for a few years now, I daresay you've come a long way and have made it through some seriously bumpy parts of the ride to get to where you are now. I'm sure if I met you and heard your story my jaw would drop and I'd tell you that your journey is awe-inspiring!

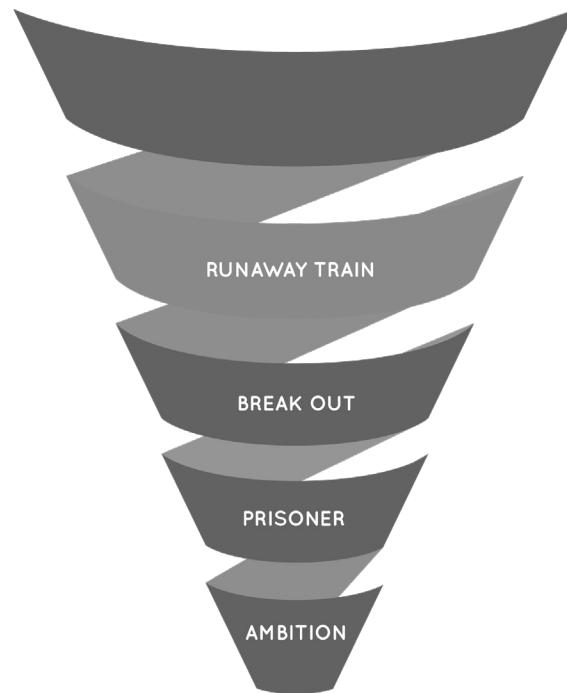
PHASE 4: RUNAWAY TRAIN

'If you're prepared and you know what it takes, it's not a risk. You just have to figure out how to get there. There is always a way to get there.'

Mark Cuban

As time goes on the growing business requires more hands on deck. This means the business owner gets to enjoy the thrilling gains of the momentum that comes from expanding the team. More people working the jobs the ambitious entrepreneur always wanted to be rid of. More equipment being used to get these jobs done. More systems to manage the flow of these jobs, and more departments being created to manage these systems. The business owner certainly broke out of their sole-trader prison, but now there is so much happening they can barely keep up.

In the fourth phase of the ambitious entrepreneur's journey towards building a freedom machine, they realise this growth curve has turned their business into a runaway train.



HAVE YOU HEARD THE TALE OF THE RUNAWAY TRAIN?

One of the stories told again and again by entrepreneurs the world over is the 'Tale Of The Runaway Train'. They may not call it that exactly, but if you listen closely you will hear that most entrepreneurs have passed through very similar phases of development and have the same sorts of war stories to prove it.

The tale starts with their fiery ambition for the business they started up with guns blazing. Then they share how they went so hard and fast that their aspirational efforts created growth so explosive it turned their business into a prison. They were trapped there for a while with almost more work than they could handle.

Entrepreneurs are motivated by various drivers, but a strong one for most is autonomy. This leads them all to share the part of the tale where they urgently needed to break free from this business prison they had made. There are so many lessons to be learned in this exciting part of the story, because this is where the entrepreneur started scaling. They refined their offering, automated their systems and started building their team. They consolidated their operations and stretched out into new business freedoms. All this newfound capacity gave space and productivity which fanned the flame of the entrepreneur's ambition. As the story goes, they directed this increased resource towards chasing extra sales, expanding their market reach and putting on more team members to keep the momentum going. What a thrilling ride!

If you are lucky enough to hear a true entrepreneur share how the tale continued to unfold, you will hear how handy these attributes were in moving through the next chapters. This is the part where that thrilling ride of business growth started to slip away from the business owner and they found it hard to control. It's not that the business was at risk of failure. On the contrary, your inspiring storyteller is likely to report that their customers were cheering, sales were strong and their staff were humming along.

But the entrepreneur driven by a desire for ultimate freedom will describe the challenges that emerged in their daily operations during that stage. You see, the entrepreneur who has successfully broken free of their time-consuming start-up prison did so by mobilising the resources their business needed to surpass their own personal limitations. Their systems and automations put things on fast forward and the team needed to keep up, performing quickly to meet the demands of relentless surges of growth. Many entrepreneurs will share the moment that the penny dropped. Somewhere along the line, their team had started playing their own game, which had morphed their company culture into some kind of unknown alien. Their business was similar to what they wanted, but with defining differences that caused them concern because their vision was being diluted.

The entrepreneur needs to be the captain of their business ship if they are going to keep directing it to fulfil their aims, but in the runaway

train part of the story, systems are running wild and the staff are a law unto themselves. This is the bit where the entrepreneur tells you how they rallied, because they knew their response would create one of two outcomes. Either the business would keep running itself at risk of derailment, or they would step up to lead a much needed management overhaul, which would turn this runaway train into their very own freedom machine.

Another two things that most entrepreneurs have in common is their creativity and their pragmatism. With their diverse skillsets and love of variety, red-blooded entrepreneurs are particularly adept at mobilising resources, generating growth and triggering change when required.

Where others perceive problems, entrepreneurs see opportunities. Their creativity goes a long way in devising practical solutions which transform challenges into new pathways of success. With their eyes firmly on the prize of ultimate business freedom, the entrepreneur will tell you that they knew exactly how to harness the potential of their runaway train business.

The part of the story about the operations overhaul is where the entrepreneur will tell you how they went through the arduous process of pulling out all the business experience and vision they have tucked away inside their own minds. They will also explain that at the same time they systematically worked with each member of their team to unearth the information stored in their heads as well. For every entrepreneur, this process allows them to unlock all of the operational knowledge central to running the business. It is a labour of love that leaves no stone unturned. The more insight they can harness, the more potential they can bring to life in their business.

The 'Tale Of The Runaway Train' reaches the final stages after all of that business knowledge is unlocked. The entrepreneur then works to lock it down into new operational systems. These new management systems create accountability, efficiency and consistently high performance. It is not the end of the business story at all, but this operational transformation leads to the final parts where we see how the business owner managed to reap the rewards they had been striving for all along.

Their new process management ushers in certainty for their team and sustainable growth for the company. This new look company is the one that ultimately allows the entrepreneur to achieve their grand aim – the freedom to make their own life choices. Autonomy to direct their own health, relationships, time and business precisely how they choose to.

PHASE 5: FREEDOM MACHINE

'The secret of getting ahead is getting started.'

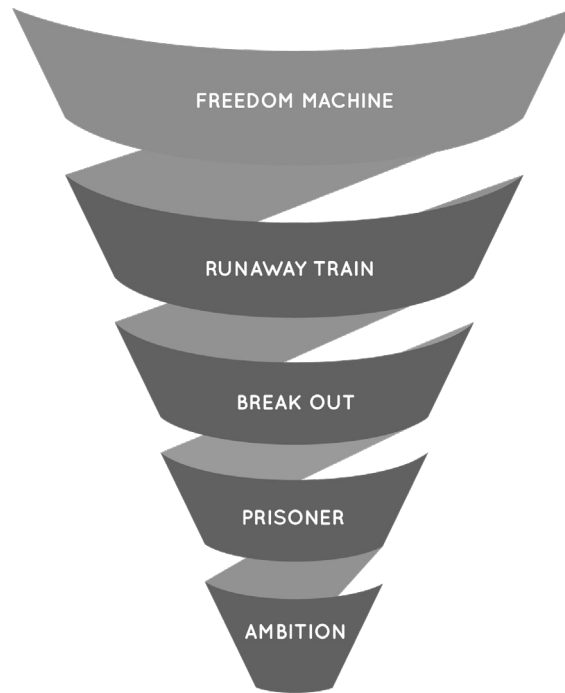
Mark Twain

Thankfully, this runaway train operation is only a few steps away from becoming the freedom machine the ambitious entrepreneur always wanted. Their current operation has everything they need: cash flow, staff, systems and resources. They simply need to harness the potential of these assets by bringing their routine operations back into control.

Empower staff by clarifying their position descriptions, and increase their confidence and clarity by having them document all the steps they take to complete their routine tasks. Centralise the storage of all this vital knowledge so every person can access it when they need to. Increase the transparency and accountability of every contributing team member with process management software which automatically creates daily task lists. This is how runaway trains become freedom machines.

The term 'freedom machine' means something different for every ambitious entrepreneur. For me, it is the freedom to create. To build. To explore and expand. To have the resources I need for new projects and new exploits right there at the ready. Some of my pursuits are about travel and adventure, others are about having creative freedom to write, walk, read and run when I want to. Still, a vital gift my freedom machine gives me is quality time with those I love. What I love most is being able to choose to start, continue or stop anything and everything simply because I can. I wonder, what lifestyle choices will your freedom machine give you?

Every business has the capacity to become a tool of freedom and empowerment for the owner if they prioritise the development of management systems. This will allow them to smooth out the bumps of their routine operations and lock them down into stable, predictable routines. The best time to start managing your business this way is from the very outset, literally! In a perfect process world, you would document the process for renewing your business name when you first registered it, or at least schedule the renewal date in your calendar. In that perfect world you would document the process for reordering the business cards when you ordered your first bundle, or at least save the logins and design template so they are easy to retrieve.



In the real world most people don't do this. There's too much to do. It doesn't seem important. You forget or don't even think about it. But the longer you leave the job, the bigger it gets and the more tangled the management mess becomes. At some point the steps of routine tasks like these will need to be captured, which makes today the perfect day to start!

Documenting your routine daily business processes is good. But better is using workflow tools to turn these written up tasks into silky smooth workplace systems. While every business will benefit from adopting this approach, there are six specific challenges of business growth screaming out for this fix.

INSTALLING NEW TECH

If you're currently working to install new software, build a new website or develop a new integration, please, please, please include the development of training manuals in your implementation plan. Your website developer, project manager or systems support representative should understand from the outset that the job does not end when the new tech is up and running. The most essential part of any technology upgrade is training your people to use it properly. Off-the-shelf training manuals and online tutorials are a great start, but they will not show YOUR team in YOUR workplace how to use the tech to serve YOUR unique business scenario. Create a customised manual to show your staff how to use the required functions in your day to day use of the new system.

GROWING TOO FAST

One of the best problems to have is a business growing faster than its systems! I love working with entrepreneurs who started from scratch, then worked hard at perfecting their business model to bring in sales and employ more and more staff. That snowballing growth curve is supremely exciting. A few years of hard work can lead to the development of advertising that lands well, winning PR campaigns, successful referral programs, websites which attract and convert! After putting in the hard yards in those early years, it can feel like the business has struck gold. These scenarios are fabulous, as long as you have processes and procedures in place to ensure workers keep working and systems stay properly maintained so the growth curve can keep turning upwards.

STUCK IN A PLATEAU

A less desirable problem many entrepreneurs face is the plateau that comes from stretching the limits of their time, cashflow, systems and staffing resources. There is nothing more frustrating for the business owner and their team than to reach a point where things simply can't get better if they stay the same. Equipment not functioning properly, things getting lost, time and money being wasted. These circumstances lead to unnecessarily high absenteeism and workplace stress, along with low levels of morale, productivity and accuracy. The absence of clear

operational guidelines will create problems which stall growth and even reverse it. For some, these problems will lead to their demise.

EXPANDING YOUR TEAM

You cannot possibly bring new team members on board without having processes in place for their recruitment, induction, training and ongoing management ... oh wait ... you can ... and people do! Maybe this is why so many managers are frustrated and burned out, and so many employees are feeling exactly the same way.

An absence of documented systems for staff onboarding and performance management will not set the stage for your team members to settle in quickly and start producing excellent outcomes. It is a vicious cycle that needs to be reversed. A lack of clearly defined plans can lead to excessively drawn out training periods, wasted time (which is money), poor outcomes, disillusionment and disengagement. This will ultimately see employees underperforming, quitting or having their position terminated.

DUPLICATING OUTLETS

You're on a good thing and you know it! It's so good in fact that you want to do it again. And again. And again. Pick up that great little business model and plant it again on the other side of town, in the next state, or even on the other side of the world. It's a perfect strategy for expansion that will work if you do it right. If things are running profitably and productively in your current outlet, why not build another one?

You could start a second service-based practice, open another retail shop, even launch a new branch of your website in every corner of the globe. The trick is being able to step back to see your business operations as a series of interconnected systems made of individual steps that function together to make your special brand of magic! If you can document what those steps are and how they function together, outsourcing and automating along the way, there is no reason you can't multiply your business to scale sooner rather than later.

GOING ON A LONG HOLIDAY

For many ambitious business owners, the idea of taking an extended break is a pipedream that eludes them at best, and taunts them at worst. How could you possibly leave your clients? Who would manage the staff? What would happen to the business you have humming along right now? It is a challenging conundrum that most entrepreneurs face - they're strongly motivated by freedom and autonomy, yet their enterprising ways often see them building an empire that chains them to the wheel. If you want that fortnight on a beach in Bali, or three months trekking around Europe enjoying the best years of your life, you need to document exactly what your people will need to do to keep all the balls in the air while you are away. Plan it! Do it!

Every growing business will enjoy more sales, more customers and more staff, and with this growth comes greater management demands. Investing time and resources into the development of robust management systems will create limitless avenues of autonomy for ambitious entrepreneurs who have their sights set on the wide blue yonder of business success.