

LOOKING AFTER NUMBER ONE

Is it time that you started to look after the most important person in your business?

Roland Hanekroot reports



Let me paint you a picture: As a business owner you feel overwhelmed on a day-to-day basis. Stress is constant, crises are everywhere and no one seems to be able to get on with the job without you.

If it's not a staff member who's causing you grief it will be a client, or a supplier, or the tax department or a landlord or the council... the list goes on. There are so many important things you'd like to get around to, but you get to the end of every day with just as many loose ends as you started.

And to top it off, your health is suffering, your kids wonder who that strange person is that walks in and out of the house sometimes, and when you took a vacation last year, you were forever looking for mobile phone reception to keep the business afloat.

Recognize that picture at all?

NOBODY 'GETS IT'

What makes it all even harder is the sense that nobody 'gets it'. When you try and explain your life to someone who doesn't run their own business, chances are their eyes will glaze over before you've even finished the first sentence.

The feeling of isolation and being alone adds to the consistent feelings of being overwhelmed and stress and will often cost the business owner dearly, both personally and professionally.

Yet as business owners we just "soldier on", don't we, because we don't know what else to do; nobody else is going to do it for us and we can often feel trapped.

So, what can you do to get out of this trap and start to build a business that's fun and that sustains you for years to come?

YOUR TIME

As a business coach working with small business owners, I often ask my clients what they believe is the most valuable resources of their business. The most frequent responses I get are: my staff, my customers, my relationships, my bank balance.

And while those are all of course very valuable, there are two things that are more valuable than all of the others put together: your time, and your health.

Think about it; all other resources you can hire, buy or borrow more of. Your health and your time

are the only truly limited resources in your business and what's more, the business can't develop and grow without an ample supply of your focused time and in optimum health.

So, take a deep breath and ask yourself: isn't it time to treat those two key resources with the respect they deserve? Isn't it about time to start to look after yourself and acknowledge that you just can't do it all on your own?

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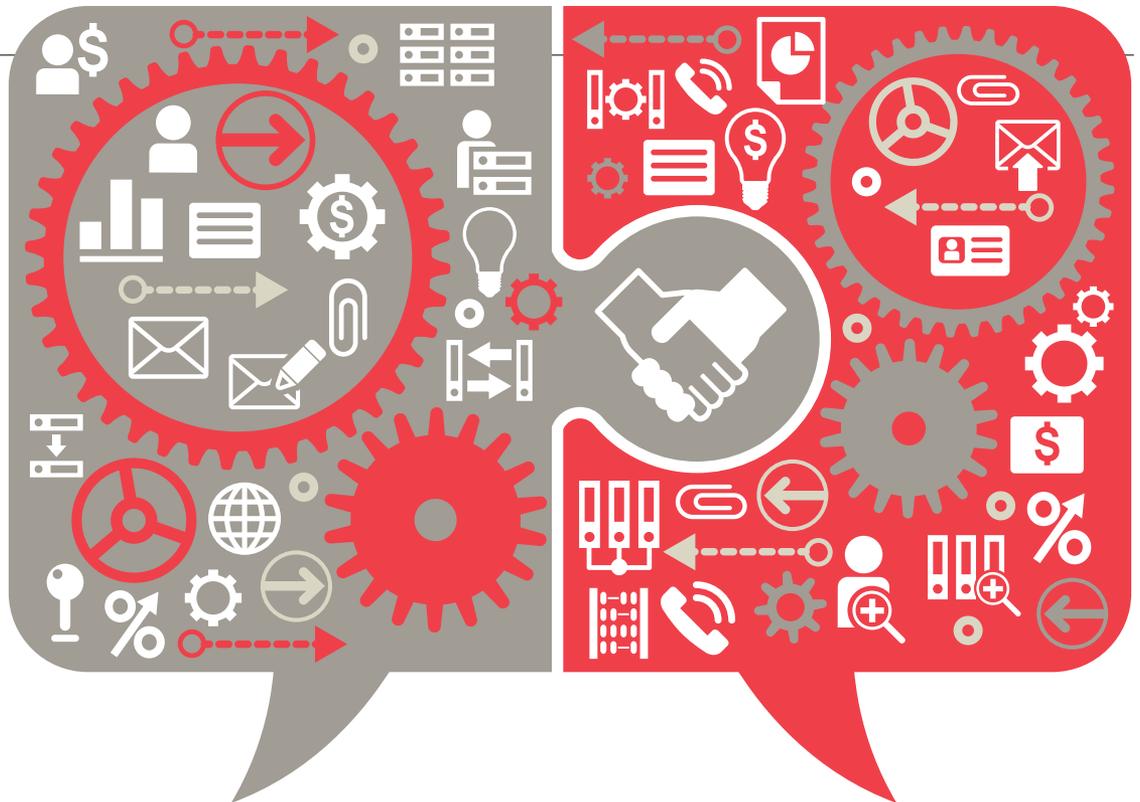
Because the good news is this: You don't have to do it all alone, there are other people out there who 'get it' – honestly; these people are called fellow business owners and getting involved with fellow business owners may be one of the most effective things you can do to lower your stress – and build your business.

WENDY GETS CONNECTED

Wendy is a client of mine with a small financial advisory business. A few years ago Wendy's life looked just like what I described above: lack of sleep, stressed and worn out.

One day a business customer invited Wendy to come along to a weekly business breakfast group. Although Wendy had never been much of a networker she decided to attend.

The meeting was eye opening for Wendy, because there, at the breakfast table, were 35 small business owners in similar circumstances to herself. Clearly here was a group of people who did 'get it', because they lived it every day, just like Wendy herself. The difference between this group of business owners



and Wendy herself being that they decided to ‘get out there’ and stop trying to do it all on their own. These business owners had made a commitment to support each other in the development of their businesses, every week.

Wendy decided to join the group more or less on the spot, and has attended the breakfast meeting every week for the last three years. The change in Wendy’s outlook on life and business has been amazing. She said to me: “For the first time in ages I feel optimistic and excited about my business again.”



Roland Hanekroot is a highly experienced business coach and mentor for small business owners and the author of ‘The Ten Truths’ books for business owners. As a special offer for readers of this magazine you can download the first of Roland’s books: “The Ten Truths for Raising a Healthy Bouncy Business” for free as an e-book or audiobook. Just go to this page to access your free copy now: <http://www.newperspectives.com.au/alfreebook/>

WENDY’S ADVICE

Besides attending the breakfast meeting each week, Wendy also regularly meets with her fellow members one-on-one. She’s often asked for advice and for once, people’s eyes don’t glaze over when she talks about a pressing issue. On the contrary, they roll up their sleeves and want to know more.

One of the objectives of the group is to refer business to each other, and by the end of year three of her membership, Wendy’s business had grown by 50%, largely as a result of joining the group.

The best news is that Wendy doesn’t feel so isolated anymore, she is even sleeping again and her family get to see her again as well.

THE BENEFITS

Getting involved with other people in business is one of the most effective ways to look after yourself.

The benefits are well documented and include:

1. Support and feedback from others who do get it and have probably ‘been there, done that’
2. Opportunities for business growth through word of mouth and networking
3. Shared knowledge and access to experts
4. Building relationships and alliances for future business development

OPTIONS

Here are some options for getting involved:

1. Join your local business association, socials, network meetings, trainings and other gatherings
2. Join your local or state Chamber of Commerce and get involved
3. Investigate Meetup groups (meetup.com); there are so many of these groups, some really active and some less so... just go and try some out
4. Search in Google for networking groups and networking meetings
5. Join an advisory board program, or instigate your own advisory board made up of fellow business owners

Surrounding yourself with like-minded people will reduce your stress levels and be one of the best business decisions you ever make... I promise you.

So go on... get out there! **MPA**