



Networking is invaluable for small business owners.

# LOOK AFTER YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET

Customers, staff, suppliers, inspectors, assessors, OH&S, landlords, Work Cover, tax, the bank, paperwork, marketing, IT, sales, quality assurance – as a business owner, the stress never ends, says business coach **Roland Hanekroot**.

YOU RUN AROUND from crisis to crisis all day, and no one seems to be able to do anything without you. As a result, you never seem to get around to doing the stuff you really want to do.

If that wasn't bad enough, your health suffers, your family barely sees you and even when you do take a well-earned break, you are on the phone constantly, just so the business will still be there when you get back.

Most business owners feel overwhelmed and stressed and unsure where to focus their attention next. Nobody gets it.

Try and explain your life to someone who doesn't run their own business and the chances are their eyes will glaze over before you've even finished the first sentence.

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

Yet most business owners just soldier on regardless, because they don't know what else to do, and they often feel trapped.

Does this feel familiar? If it does, what can you do to get out of this trap and start to build a fun business that sustains you for years to come?

## YOUR TIME

As a business coach who specialises in working with people in

most valuable resource of their business. The most frequent answers are: my staff, my customers, my machinery.

In actual fact, nothing will ever be as valuable to your business as your time and your health.

Everything else in your business you can hire, buy or borrow more of, but your time and your health are the only truly limited resources that your business cannot live without.

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

There are other people out there who get it. They 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.

Jamie is a client of mine with a panel shop in inner city Melbourne. A few years ago, Jamie's life looked just like I described above: he wasn't sleeping and was stressed and worn out.

One day a business customer invited Jamie to come along to a weekly business breakfast group. Although Jamie had never been much of a networker, he decided to attend. The meeting was a revelation for Jamie, because there, at the breakfast table, were 35 small business owners who were all in the same boat and they

## NEW PERSPECTIVES

Roland Hanekroot is a business coach and mentor and the author of *The Ten Truths* books for business owners. He runs a series of regular free webinars called The Small Business Masterminds Foundation Webinars. Find out more and register free at [www.newperspectives.com.au/masterminds/](http://www.newperspectives.com.au/masterminds/)



met every week to support each other in the development of their businesses.

Jamie joined the group and has attended the business breakfast every week for the last three years. The change in his outlook on life and business has been amazing. "I can see the light at the end of the tunnel again and for once, it's not a train," he says.

Besides attending the breakfast meeting each week, Jamie also regularly meets with his fellow members one on one. He's often asked for advice and for once, people's eyes don't glaze over when he 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 also to refer business to each other, and by the end of the third year of his membership, Jamie's business has grown by 50 per cent, largely as a result of joining the group.

The best news is that Jamie doesn't feel so isolated anymore, he is sleeping properly again and his family get to see him again as well.



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

## 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:

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

## OPTIONS

Here are some options for getting involved:

- Join your local MTA barbecues, training sessions and other gatherings
- Join your local or state chamber of commerce and get involved
- Join a business referral group, such as BNI ([www.bni.com.au](http://www.bni.com.au)) and get involved
- Join an advisory board program.

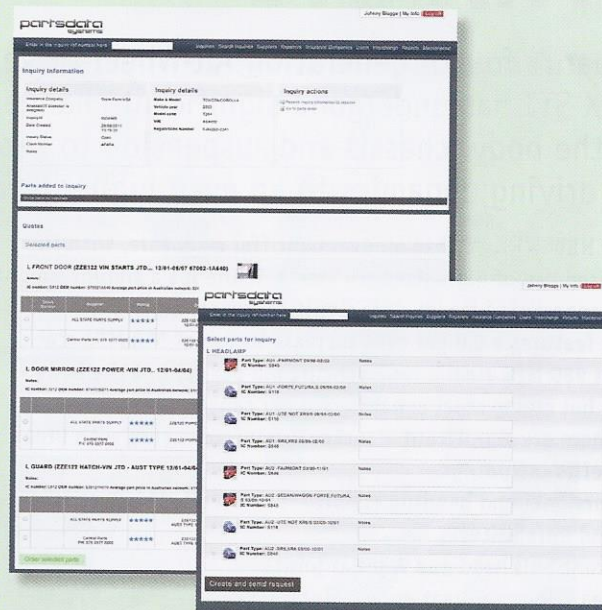
Surrounding yourself with like-minded people will reduce your stress levels and be one of the best business decisions you ever make, I promise you.

So go on. Get out there.



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