

CRAIG WILKINSON



# HOW TO BUILD AND GROW A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

Discover the 9 key areas of business you **NEED** to master

[www.EliteBusinessAcademy.co.uk](http://www.EliteBusinessAcademy.co.uk)

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# Introduction by Craig Wilkinson

I've written this book to help you to transform your business and your life. Big words, I know, but I'm not messing around here - as you'll discover.

Did you know that there are 9 key fundamental areas of any business that you have to master if you want to build a successful, profitable business that runs like clockwork - without you having to work long hours in it?

In this book, I am going to share with you some dynamite knowledge. I'm going to give you the 9 key areas, so you don't have to waste years of your valuable time trying to work them out, like I did. I'm going to tell you the specific online tools, systems and steps that I use to run and grow my businesses, so you don't have to invest hundreds of thousands of pounds trialling different systems, like I did. I will also give you the steps to one of the most important tools every single business should have - a 12 month business plan and a 90 day action plan.

These simple yet highly effective tools, systems and steps are now helping thousands of business owners all over the world to improve and grow their businesses. In doing so, this is now helping to provide a better quality of life for them and their families.

Now let's get cracking and take the first steps to transforming your business and life.



**Business Coach  
and Motivational Speaker**



# 1 Mindset and Personal Development

Before you can start to work on improving and changing your business or your life, you have to change something else first and that's you. With all respect, you are where you are today in business and your life due to the decisions you have made (based on the level of knowledge you have), your core values and your beliefs. All of which sit within your mindset.

So for things to improve and change you have to improve and change your mindset first. To do this we have to embrace Personal Development. At the age of 36 my business coach introduced me to Personal Development and asked me to read two books. At first I refused telling him...

"I'm not paying you shit loads of money to tell me to read books. I'm paying you to show me how to work less hours and make more money."

He replied "Craig, if you can't change your closed and negative mindset and read two simple books, how the hell are you going to make big life changing decisions moving forward?"

He had a valid point. The reason I started working with a business coach was to learn how to improve my business. If I was going to moan and object every time my mindset told me "NO DON'T DO IT", I would continue to be that busy fool. So I read the two books.

Unbeknown to me at the time, reading those books was the start of a life-changing journey for me. After reading the books the penny had finally dropped. I realised that the problems I had in my business and life were down to one thing, my closed mindset. That was in 2007 and since then I have submerged myself into personal development. I've implemented the ideas I've learnt into my businesses and life and that's the #1 reason for my success today.

So here are the two books. I want you to buy the books or download them as audio books onto your smartphone or tablet and start to learn how to build a business the correct way and discover how to change your life forever. Trust me, if you take this knowledge and apply it, you will start to see huge transformations which will deliver you results.

## The Secret - Rhonda Byrne

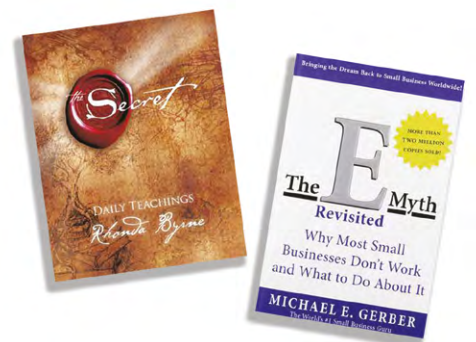
Buy The Secret Book On Amazon [bit.ly/cw-secret](http://bit.ly/cw-secret)

Download The Secret Audiobook From Audible [bit.ly/cw-asecret](http://bit.ly/cw-asecret)

## The E Myth Revisited - Author Michael Gerber

Buy The E Myth Book On Amazon [bit.ly/cw-emyth](http://bit.ly/cw-emyth)

Download The E Myth Audiobook from Audible [bit.ly/cw-aemyth](http://bit.ly/cw-aemyth)



## 2 Cash and Finance

One of the biggest killers to any business is the business owner's lack of financial understanding. This inevitably leads to the business having cash flow issues and putting the business and its owner under huge financial stress and strains.

In my early years of business I struggled to understand the importance of having a firm grip on my business finances, due to not having the time to sit down and learn about them. After all, I was a joiner hanging doors for a living, not an accountant crunching numbers.

So I plodded on praying that the money side of the business would work itself out, hoping that there would be enough money coming in to not have to worry about my finances.

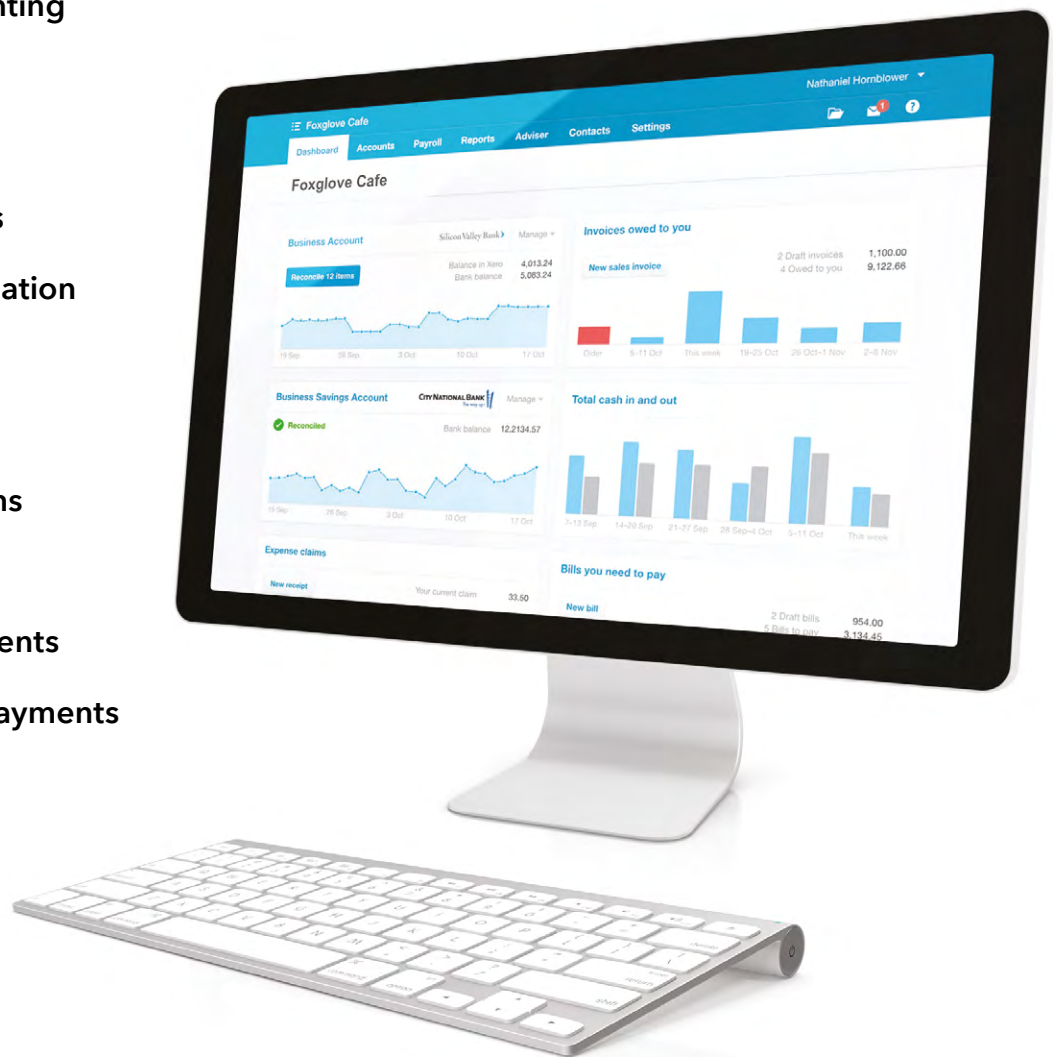
Keeping my fingers crossed and being that naïve and stupid was a huge mistake. After paying my employees and sub contractors, my suppliers and overheads, most months there was not enough money left in the bank to pay me. I ended up having to 'rob Peter to pay Paul' and this caused me many sleepless nights.

Needless to say I was forced into getting off my arse and quickly learned the skills and knowledge on how to structure my businesses finances. If I hadn't have done that I would have probably lost the business and even worse - ended up having a nervous breakdown.



Technology has come on leaps and bounds over the last 20 years. The cloud has revolutionised how we run our businesses. Apps and online tools make it super easy to run your business finances from your smart phone. So here are some fantastic tools that I use in my businesses to help in the financial areas such as:

- Online accounting
- VAT
- Invoicing
- Profit and loss
- Bank reconciliation
- Payroll
- Quotes
- Expense claims
- Reporting
- Making payments
- Taking card payments



### **Xero**

Accounting software that does just about everything. [www.xero.com/uk](http://www.xero.com/uk)

### **Go Cardless**

Easy way to collect direct debits. [gocardless.com](http://gocardless.com)

### **iZettle**

Accept card payments on the go. [www.izettle.com/gb](http://www.izettle.com/gb)

# 3 Systems and Procedures

If you are like the majority of business owners you are probably rushing around doing lots of different tasks. You're trying your best to please everyone and spinning loads of plates, as well as wearing loads of different hats. One minute you are the boss, then the accountant, then the salesperson, then the marketing manager, then the recruitment officer, then the estimator, then the admin person... the list goes on.

I used to think that this was part and parcel of what a business owner's day was like. I'd resigned myself to the fact that my role and responsibility as the Director was to make sure everything in the business ran as smoothly as it could. If this meant doing a bit of everything myself then so be it. However this is what led me to feeling like I'd become a slave to my business.

Everything changed for me after I'd read *The E Myth Revisited*, one of the books I recommended earlier. This book taught the importance of having systems in your business that allow your staff / team to follow a procedure (basically an instruction manual) to run your business for you. This ultimately gives you your valuable time back to concentrate on overseeing and growing the business, rather than being a jack-of-all-trades and stuck on a spinning hamster wheel.

Think about McDonald's. McDonald's is one of the most systemised businesses on the planet. It doesn't matter if you buy a burger and fries in London or in New York, the service and the food is exactly the same. Why? Because they have systems behind the scenes that run the business, and staff that are trained to follow their procedures or instruction manual.

Now if you are thinking....

"That's OK for you Craig, you have staff to help, but I don't and I can't afford to employ someone full time to help."

Well neither did I years ago. I couldn't afford to take on another person to help. What I did do though, is I created a procedure or instruction manual for all my admin tasks. Then I outsourced these tasks to a Virtual PA who I paid on an hourly rate to do things like answer the phone, do quotes and invoices, and follow-up calls. This freed up more time for me to bring in more business and make more profit. The profit then paid for the Virtual PA. Bingo! I was starting to systemise my business.



Here are some of the powerful systems that I use in my businesses which have helped them to run like clockwork, without me having to do everything myself.

## Infusionsoft

Automate your business sales and marketing, while combining your CRM, email marketing, lead capture and e-commerce in one place. [www.Infusionsoft.Com](http://www.infusionsoft.com)

## Team Work

Collaboration tools designed to maximize your team's productivity and communication. [www.teamwork.com](http://www.teamwork.com)

## Zoho

Run your entire business with Zoho's suite of online productivity tools. [www.Zoho.com](http://www.Zoho.com)





# 4 Time Management

For me, the rewards of running your own business are having the freedom to choose where you spend your time. However, the vast majority of business owners do not have the luxury of being able to do this. Why? Because they let time control them rather than them controlling time.

The long hours, the work loads and the constant pressure to perform wears on even the most passionate individuals. Many business owners, even successful ones, get stuck working much longer hours than their employees. They fear that their business will stall in their absence, so they avoid taking time off and having well deserved holidays. Some even commit the ultimate sin and sacrifice their quality family time and choose to put their work first.

I know as this used to be me. The busy fool!

But this all changed when I had learnt how to manage my time, rather than letting time manage me. The first thing that you need to understand before you can even begin to manage your time is to work out where your time is being spent in the first place.

To do this you will need to use a Time Management Tool to log where your time is being spent. For this I recommend 2 apps - **Hours Time Tracking** for IOS and **Time Tracker** for Android users. Here's how to begin to get your time back.

## Step 1

Make a list in the app of all the tasks you undertake in your business, and I mean all of them no matter how small.

## Step 2

Then every time you start one of the tasks throughout the day, click the start button. When you have completed the task click the stop button. The app will then log your time for each and every task you undertake. I recommend doing this for at least 2 weeks to get an accurate account of your working week.

## Step 3

At the end of the 2 weeks, analyse and add up the time spent working on each individual task. The apps reporting system will help you do this. You will be shocked to discover where your actual time is being spent or wasted.

## Step 4

Now that you are fully aware of where your time is being spent it's time to do something about it. You are now going to start to delegate each task to someone else, so you can free up your time. And before you say "I don't have anyone to delegate tasks to" or "I'm the only person on the planet that can do your job" ... well that's total rubbish and you need to have a serious shift in mindset, or you will be a slave to your job forever.

So here's what I want you to do next. Have a look at each task and the time you spent doing it. Then ask yourself the following question:

*With a little training and the right system and procedures in place, could this task be outsourced to someone else or am I the only person with the skills, knowledge and expertise who can do this task?*

If the answer is NO and you are the only person who can do this then DO IT.

If the answer is YES it could be outsourced, then find someone to delegate the task to. It could be another member of your team, it could be a family member or a virtual PA, but get delegating and outsource as many tasks as you can.

## Example

As an example - Imagine if you could delegate say just 5 tasks and these 5 tasks freed up 16 hours of your time every single week. Just think of how you could then reinvest those 16 hours each week into working on the other 8 key areas you need to master. It wouldn't take you long to see your business improving and growing and the results flooding in would it?

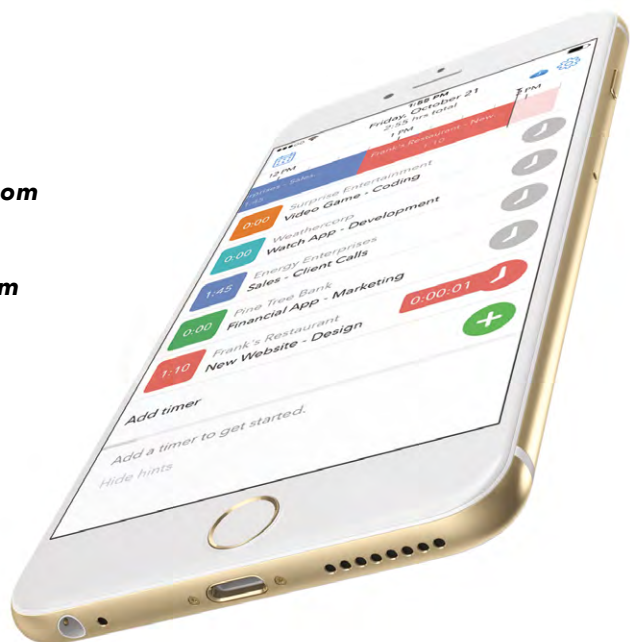
Now go and get your time back!

## Hours Time Tracking

App For iOS Devices - [www.hourstimetracking.com](http://www.hourstimetracking.com)

## Time Tracker

App For Android Devices - [www.atimetracker.com](http://www.atimetracker.com)



# 5 Team and Training

I think you know by now that you can't build and grow a successful business all on your own. You are going to need help along the way.

It doesn't matter if you are a small business taking on your first member of staff, or a large company taking on a complete new business division. When you start to employ people it becomes a huge gamble, as it's your time and money that will be going down the pan if you get it wrong.

In my early business years I have made some big mistakes in taking on the wrong people. I would take on family and friends and get recommendations from other people, as I believed that having the TRUST factor was going to be enough for them to do their roles effectively. However just because I had a relationship with some people didn't mean to say that they would have the correct skills and mindset to undertake their roles.

What I learnt from my costly mistakes is that anyone can blag an interview. Lots of people can talk the talk and sell themselves, but that's not what you are looking for. What you are ultimately looking for is someone who has the correct mindset, has the same work ethic and values as you do, has fresh ideas and has a positive attitude. If you find someone like this you can teach them the skills they need to be a success in their role.

Let me introduce you to:

**Belbin Report - [www.Belbin.com](http://www.Belbin.com)**

You can't blag Belbin.

	Belbin Role Strengths	Allowable Weaknesses
	<b>Plant:</b> Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Solves difficult problems	Ignores incidentals. Too pre-occupied to communicate effectively.
	<b>Resource Investigator:</b> Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities. Develops contacts.	Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed
	<b>Coordinator:</b> Mature, confident, a good chairperson. Clarifies goals, promotes decision-making, delegates well.	Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads personal work
	<b>Shaper:</b> Dynamic, challenging, thrives on pressure. The drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Prono to provocation. Offends people's feelings
	<b>Monitor Evaluator:</b> Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options. Judges accurately.	Lacks drive and ability to inspire others
	<b>Teamworker:</b> Co-operative, mild, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens, builds, averts friction and conflict.	Indecisive in crunch situations
	<b>Implementer:</b> Disciplined, reliable, conservative and efficient. Turns ideas into practical actions.	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
	<b>Completer Finisher:</b> Painstaking conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors and omissions. Delivers on time.	Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate
	<b>Specialist:</b> Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply	Contributes on only a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities

Belbin is a simple but highly accurate online tool/report that you get your existing or potential team to complete to pinpoint their real strengths and weaknesses. It asks a series of multiple-choice questions that they answer then, it produces a unique personalised behavioural report of that person. It tells and shows you what characteristics they are strong in and what they are weak in, so you can make an informed decision as to whether they have the skills to do the job or not.



# 6 Marketing

As a business owner you are constantly looking for ways to attract more business without breaking the bank. There are so many different marketing strategies and ideas out there, where do you start? Over the years I have tried everything from leaflet drops to radio advertising. I've been promised the world by website designers and SEO experts who did not deliver, leaving me out of pocket and feeling ripped off.

However after years of learning about marketing strategies, I finally cracked it. My websites were at #1 on Google, social media was bringing in enquires and my email marketing became another powerful tool that generated sales.

So here are the 3 most effective and powerful forms of marketing that every small to medium sized business has to have to help to grow their business.

## Social Media Strategy

Social media, if used correctly, will generate your business more enquires than you can deal with. The problem is social media can be very time consuming especially if you are posting to multiple platforms every day.

I leverage my time by using social media management tools such as:

[www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com)

[www.sproutsocial.com](http://www.sproutsocial.com)

[www.meetedgar.com](http://www.meetedgar.com)

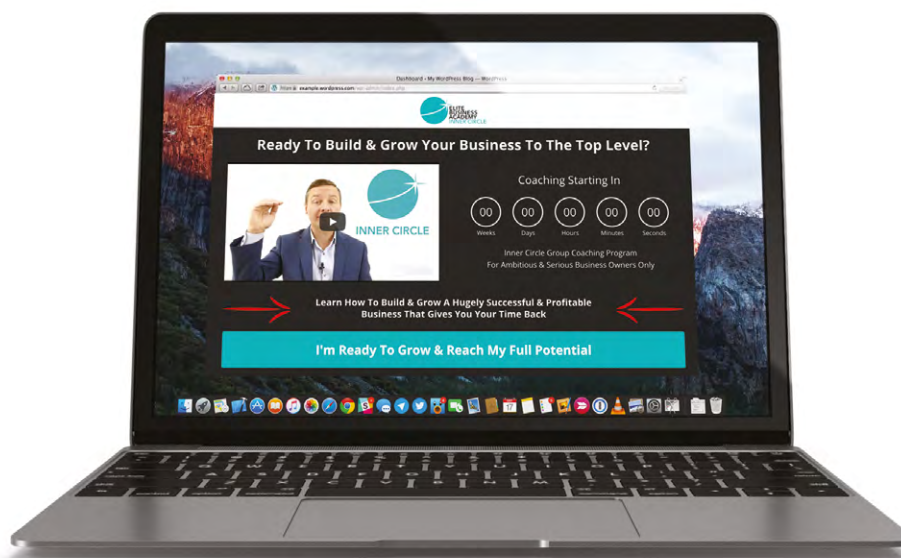
[www.buffer.com](http://www.buffer.com)

These tools let me pre schedule my posts and tweets to be sent out on a date and time to multiple platforms automatically, saving me huge amounts of time. They also give me reports of which posts are the most engaging, so I can keep re-scheduling my most popular posts to win more business.



## Websites

Just because you have a website doesn't mean that you will generate loads of enquires. Websites have to be designed with 16 must-have features built into them to stand any chance of getting found on page 1 of Google. You also need to be able to add your own images - videos - blog articles and additional pages yourself without having to pay or rely on your web designers to do this.



All my websites are built in **WordPress**. [www.WordPress.com](http://www.WordPress.com) is an online, open source website creation tool. It's probably the easiest and most powerful blogging and website content management system (or CMS) in existence today. You don't have to be a web expert to build your own websites, create blog articles and add powerful new content to your website if you are using WordPress. Another big advantage of building your websites on this platform is that Google loves WordPress websites.

I would strongly recommend that you build your websites on WordPress.

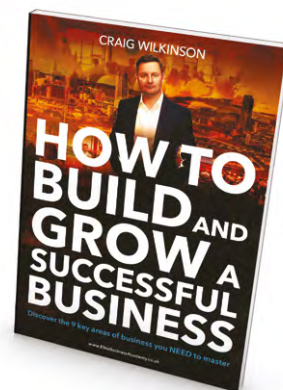
## Email Marketing

Email marketing is extremely powerful if you have an email marketing strategy. Most businesses do not have a strategy, they just spam their email database with a newsletter or special offers, but this turns most people off. People don't like to be sold to.

So here is what you need to do to get more enquiries and sales from emails:

### Step 1

Add a lead magnet to the home page of your website. A lead magnet is a piece of information or valuable knowledge that solves one of your potential client's problems (like this free ebook you are reading now). But in return for your lead magnet, your potential client has to give you their name and email address.



### Step 2

Having captured their details, this then triggers an automatic email marketing campaign of 5 pre-written emails. This campaign then educates your potential new clients on your business, your products or your services, and how they could benefit from them. It also delivers video testimonials from past clients telling them how amazing your business is and demonstrating that you are the authority in your profession. Then, once you have built credibility and a relationship, you make the offer to buy from you, all via email.

I guarantee that if you follow this simple strategy you will win more business from email marketing.

The marketing system I use for our email marketing campaigns is **www.Infusionsoft.com** it's the world's most powerful marketing system.

But there are also plenty of other great email marketing tools and systems that you can use, such as

[www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)

[www.aweber.com](http://www.aweber.com)

[www.activecampaign.com](http://www.activecampaign.com)



ActiveCampaign >





# 7 Networking and Contacts

In 2006 I was invited to my first ever networking event. I'd never even heard of business networking at the time but I went more out of curiosity. Although I found my first experience of networking challenging, mainly because it took me well outside my comfort zone, I saw the benefits of meeting up with other positive business owners who all wanted to help each other.

Unbeknown to me the decision to start networking would change the course of my life forever. It was through attending networking events that I met my business and marketing coaches who taught me everything I needed to know about building a successful business. Since 2006 I have also won over £3.2 million worth of new business from the contacts I made through my new network.

It's a fact that the more people who know about you and your business, the more chance you have of winning more business. So, if you are not out there meeting new people and educating them on the benefits you and your company can provide you are missing out massively.

There are loads of fantastic local networking events that you can attend. Do a Google search to find them. Remember "It's not WHAT you know, it's WHO you know" in business that opens doors of opportunity, so go and knock on as many doors as you can.

I am the Founder of the Elite Business Academy, an organisation that helps business owners improve and grow their businesses by attending our monthly Hybrid Networking and Coaching sessions. We have thousands of people attend our meetings to network and meet new contacts, they also get to learn new marketing and business skills that they can implement into their businesses.

You are more than welcome to come and meet me at one of our events. You will also get the opportunity to network with my contacts too. Head over to [www.EliteBusinessAcademy.co.uk](http://www.EliteBusinessAcademy.co.uk) to find out more.



# 8 Products and Services

I was the owner and director of a general building company and I'm a joiner by trade. As an experienced builder my company could do just about anything from fixing a leaky tap to building you a new home. We would take on any type of building work as we had the experience and knowledge to do so.

However it was pointed out to me years ago by my business coach that doing anything and everything may have kept us busy and contributed towards the overheads and wages, but it was never going to make me significant profit.

I decided to create some simple costing spreadsheets and Gantt charts using **www.smartsheet.com**. I soon realised that out of the masses of different jobs we did, loft conversions were the most profitable area of the business.

So we re-branded the building company into a loft conversion company and became laser focused with marketing just one product, loft conversions. Our new WordPress website was SEO to the max for our key search terms, and bingo, the enquiries started to flood in.

For the first time ever I knew that every single day my team and I went to work, we were making the maximum amount of profit we could.

So what are your most profitable products or services? Do you 100% actually know? If not work out which products and services these are by using **www.smartsheet.com**



# 9 Customer Service

We all know that word of mouth marketing and client referrals are the best way to win more business, right? So it's an absolute must that you and your team provide a super high standard of service as well as making sure that your client's experience of working with you is faultless.

What you have to remember here is that your customers and clients are no longer comparing the service and experience that you or even your competitors have provided for them. No, they are comparing you to the service and experience they receive from companies such as Apple - Amazon - Next and Tesco - who make buying from them easy and simple.

There will be areas of your business right now that you know can be improved, and if you know this, I'm sure that your customers and clients can see, hear and feel this too.

When was the last time you sent out a survey to your customers and clients asking them how you can improve the quality of service and the experience of buying from you? You see they will answer your questions honestly so you will get the right information on what and where you need to improve.

I use **www.surveymonkey.com** to survey all my clients. With Survey Monkey you can create and publish online surveys in minutes, and view results graphically and in real time. You choose a template and your questions and email addresses of the person you want to survey and that's it. There is even a free version so it could cost you nothing other than a little setting up time.





# Bonus Section:

## It's time to write your Business Plan

So now I have given you the 9 key areas and plenty of tools for you to check out, what are you going to do about it? Most business owners say they want to improve and grow but do very little in terms of TAKING ACTION and actually doing something about it.

The 9 key areas I have shared in this book are what you need to cover and add into your 12 Month Business Plan. Wait a minute - do you actually have a plan?

The reason why I used to be that BUSY FOOL was simple. I did not have any form of written down plan of where I was taking my business or life. I was just winging it and keeping my fingers crossed that what I was doing was going to work. Trust me this is no way to grow a successful business.

Without a simple plan in place, how the hell do you know what direction you should be heading in? For all you know you could be heading in the complete wrong direction and taking yourself further away from your goals and dreams.

Without a plan that contains these 9 key areas you are winging it. For the business owners who are winging it and rushing around like headless chickens, I guarantee at some point they will hit a brick wall with their businesses, which will put them under huge stress and financial pressure.





# Do you need help to grow your business?

Running your own business can be a lonely place and sometimes it feels like you have created yourself the toughest job in the world.

Why? Because as business owners we have to learn to wear many different hats.

One minute we're the boss.

Then we're doing the marketing.

Then the sales then the accounts.

Then the admin...

...the list goes on.



Is there any wonder that some business owners work long hours, have cash flow problems and have challenges with their staff?

Growing a business is challenging, that's why, like anything in life, learning from other people's achievements and their mistakes can make the difference between success or failure.

At the Elite Business Academy we understand the challenges and frustrations in growing your business. We share practical knowledge from successful people who have genuinely been there and done it. We're here to help educate, motivate and inspire you to achieve more than you ever thought possible.

Become an Academy Member and get instant access to online coaching courses, videos, workbooks, printable documents and business networking to help you to grow your business. Alternatively you can come meet us face to face at our monthly live Academies, our Masterclass Workshops and our Inner Circle Coaching events.

Discover and learn how we can help you take your business to the next level >> **Click here**





# About the Author

## Yorkshire's Business Man of the Year

In recognition for helping thousands of entrepreneurs across the UK to grow their businesses, and helping them to generate a staggering £62 million worth of new business, Craig Wilkinson was presented with the prestigious award of Yorkshire's Business Man of the Year.



## Founder of Elite Business Academy

Described by many as a visionary, Craig founded the Elite Business Academy in 2012 and started a whole new revolution. Having experienced first hand the pains and problems of growing his own businesses, Craig started the Elite Business Academy to provide help, knowledge and support to owners of small to medium sized businesses. Since then the EBA has helped thousands of business owners build a better quality of life for themselves and their families.

## Motivational Speaker

Having now spoken at over 400 seminars, conferences, workshops and events, Craig has been making waves as one of the UK's most dynamic and sought after motivational speakers. No matter what your social or educational background, Craig will empower you and elevate you to the top of your game!

## Business & Marketing Coach

Craig is one of the most successful business and marketing coaches in the UK. Over the last 2 decades Craig has built from scratch, run and sold a number of hugely successful businesses in arguably one of the toughest sectors, the construction industry. He now shares his valuable knowledge and skills by coaching business owners from all industries and sectors to do the same through his Masterclass Coaching Workshops and the Elite Business Academy.



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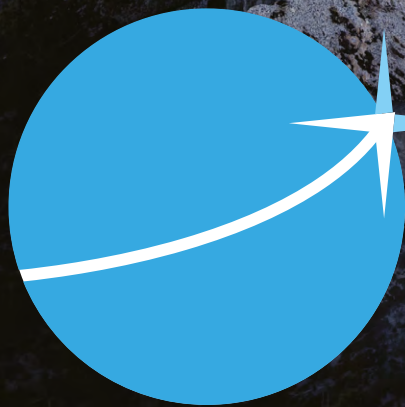
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ACADEMY**

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