

7 Simple Steps To Move Your Business Up A Gear



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Introduction

Many thanks for downloading this e-book, it is designed to help you take some easy leaps forwards and upwards with your business.

I know that as a small business owner, you **never, ever** have enough time to do anything, particularly to sit down and think!and, as you know, the tricky thing is that's precisely what you need to do to take your business forward.

I have therefore written this e-book with this in mind, I have split it up into seven separate 'chunks'. You may want to work through this all at once, or work through one chunk per day, or per week. If things get a bit crazy for a couple of weeks – don't worry, pick it up again when things start to get calmer.

Whilst each area flows on from the other, each is also a strong area to look at in its own right. By the end of the book you will have applied some strong – but simple and straight-forward – strategic marketing principles to your business.

There are some simple exercises which will help to crystallise your thoughts and take those crucial leaps forwards and upwards.

OK, let's get going and start to really get your business buzzing!



Step One

Know What's Important to You

Right, forget your business - we are going to start with **YOU**. I want you to take a moment to step back and look at yourself and we'll then build some of your thoughts into a vibrant business vision.

So, as a key step to business invigoration, I want you to answer the following questions and we will then look at these in connection with the vision for your business. Jot your answers down below each question.

- What would you like more of or less of in your life?
- What are the things in your life and in your work that really give you energy?
- What are your key strengths?
- What are the 5 most important principles or values that you hold?
- What are the things that really give you meaning in your work, and in your wider life?
- Think about your ideal self - what is that person like, and how is he/she different to how you are now?

Done that? Now, I simply want you to lean back, close your eyes and have a bit of a focused daydream (I told you the steps were easy!)

Think about where you would like you and your business to be in 3 years' time or 5 years, whichever you prefer.



Drift off and get engrossed in your daydream and really think about what you will be doing, saying and feeling. Also what will others around you, including your customers be doing, saying and feeling? See, hear and experience it in all its glory, really take time to immerse yourself in this daydream until you go from dreamy to fizzy with excitement about all the possibilities!

Jot down any key thoughts or questions that come to you:

Right, back to reality! Did you manage to go from dreamy to fizzy?

Did you conjure up a vision for the future that was both appealing and exciting? What did you like about it and what bits were still unclear?

We will start to hone this daydream into a vibrant business vision in Step Two. By taking the time in Step One to look at what is important to you, it will help you work towards ensuring you and your business are as aligned and buzzing together as possible.

The closer the alignment, the greater your passion for what you do, and the more you will enjoy your work. I truly believe that having this passion, enjoyment and added zest helps to draw customers to you and naturally makes you deliver a better product or service. Then everyone's a winner!

This close alignment is a sure-fire way to help move your business up a gear.

Right....it's time to look at Step Two!



Step Two

Create a Vibrant Vision

OK, it's time to roll up our sleeves, put our thinking caps on and create a vibrant vision for your business or refresh and reinvigorate an existing one that you have.

Firstly, let me tell you what I want you to aim for. I want you to create a vision that:

Is very powerful and inspiring to you – it should make you think, “I can't do that...can I?” “How wonderful if I could!” You need to aim for a vision that makes your eyes shine!

Is only crafted for you at this stage – if you need to translate this vision for others you can do so once you have created it for yourself. But it's much easier to start creating your business vision for yourself, without falling over words trying to craft it for others.

Has an element of emotion / feeling in it – a vision that you can ‘feel’ inside and out will be far more compelling than a dry and functional sounding one.

Before you start to craft your vision, here are some questions about your business for you to think about – both the things you want and the things you don't want.

- What type of business do you ultimately want to build or create?
- What type of customers do you want? What type of customers don't you want?
- What will you be doing in the business? What are the emotions you will be feeling when doing this?
- What do you not want to be doing? What emotions do you not want to be feeling?
- What are the emotions your customers will be feeling? What are the emotions they won't be feeling?



Answered those? Right, now let's whizz back to your thoughts from Step One – your focussed day dreaming.

- Think about an ideal day in the life of your business, what are you doing, saying and feeling?
- What are your employees (if you have any) doing, saying and feeling?
- What are your customer's doing, saying and feeling?

OK, so now try to sum up where you want your business to ultimately go, your vision should not be about HOW you will do it, but about where you want to be in 3, 5, 7 years' time.

Try to make your statement as punchy and zesty as you can – make sure it will really take your business up a level. Then leave it for a week. When you come back to it make any changes you feel it needs.

Some people have a very detailed vision, others have a couple of words that sums up how they or their customer will feel – be brave and create what you feel is right for you, not what you feel you ought to.



Step 3

Create Motivating Goals

So, how have you got on with your vision? Do you have a nice and succinct sentence or two that really excites you and gets your eyes shining?

If so, now is the time to start planning some concrete actions to start turning that vision into a reality.

If you haven't got your vision, don't fret! Try to take out 15 – 30 minutes from your day to sit somewhere quiet, calm and peaceful – easier said than done I know! Relax, breathe deeply and let your thoughts on what are the most important things to you bubble to the surface. The more you relax, the easier it will be for them to float to the surface. Use these to build your vision.

Once you have created your vision, firstly, give yourself a well-deserved, celebratory pat on the back – well done and good work!

Secondly, remember it should be an adaptable thing, so don't be afraid to change it as you reflect on it going forwards.

Thirdly, take some time to think about what are some of the obstacles that may get in the way of attaining your vision. Think about –

- **Your company** – what current and future constraints in how your business operates or is set up, could impede fulfilling your vision? What are the actions you need to take to ensure these constraints are eliminated or minimised?
- **Your competitors** – how could your competitors, both those existing now and new entrants constrain your strides towards your vision?
- **Yourself** – what do you need to do more of to reach your vision? What do you need to do less of? How do you hold yourself back? What do you need to do to enjoy your work more? ...and to reach that holy grail of a good work-life balance?



- **Those you work with** – what do you need to communicate to those you work with, be it employees or suppliers to ensure they are on-board with your vision and help you in the best way they can? With that in mind, think about who you need to share your vision with and how to phrase it for them so that their eyes are shining too.
- **What do you need to know that you don't know?** What research do you need to do to inform your decision-making and planning? Who do you need to talk to? What do you need to find out from them? Do you talk to your customers enough?

Once you have worked through those questions, you can start to build an invigorating year by year plan to achieve your vision – one that stretches you, but is achievable. Some of your first actions may be around finding out things you don't know.

Let's Get Planning

Use a grid, a mindmap or whatever way you find easiest to plan ahead. You can choose how you want to do this but the nub is to get to some crystal clear business and personal goals between now and when you want to have achieved your vision.

Make sure you include financial goals in your planning. These are an important part of moving your business up a gear.

Naturally the goals you set for the next six months will be more detailed than those you are setting for a year or two's time.

But take the time to map out what you want to have achieved by each quarter / year end to ensure both you and your business flourish.

Once you have done that start to break down the goals for the next year into smaller goals and tasks.

Also, to keep your motivation up assign rewards you will give yourself for achieving specific goals – go on, make sure you treat yourself!

Great work! You now know where you are going and have plans to get you there.



Lastly, think about what you need to tell yourself to keep yourself on track – this may be particularly needed if you feel your confidence beginning to waiver!

So, you have now created a vibrant vision, and looked at the business and personal goals to get you there. It's now time to look at how you can reach out to start making this happen – the rest of this e-book will focus on making your brand unique, understanding your customers better and communicating with them clearly.



Step Four

Invigorate your Brand

Invigorating your brand can help you ensure your business really reflects what you stand for. This is often a vital step to help take a business to the next level.

Branding can be a huge area, so we will look at just a couple of bits of it here as a start to help bring more clarity and enrichment to your brand, and to your messaging to customers.

A Branding Top Tip

If you remember nothing else, remember this about brands – the good ones communicate both their functional and emotional benefits. Even for things such as shampoo. For example, a shampoo might sell itself on the benefits of the shine it gives your hair. The functional benefit is clean hair with extra shine; the emotional benefit is greater confidence through knowing your hair looks great.

Steps towards Invigorating Your Brand

So, what is at the heart of your business brand? I asked you in Step One of this book to think about your key strengths, your values and what gives you meaning. You took these thoughts further into your vision.

We are now going to apply some of the thinking you have done in these areas, to invigorating your brand.

I am not going to look at every aspect of your brand positioning – that would be a separate book in itself. As a solid start we will look at these key areas:

- Your Brand's Values
- Your Brand's Personality
- Your Brand's Functional and Emotional Benefits

As we work through these elements ensure you think about the brand in your vision, the one you want to create, rather than your brand as it currently exists.



Brand Values

You have explored your own values and principles – now list the top 5 values or principles that you feel your business is displaying / should display? Try to hone these to be as short as you can, try for one word values, e.g. always displaying high standards could be summed up as Professionalism.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Personality

What are the main personality traits you would like your brand to exhibit? (If your business was a person, what type of person would they be?) Again try to come up with a list of 5 words that best sum up your brand personality.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Functional and Emotional Benefits

Create a list of functional and emotional benefits that your brand delivers for its customers. For example, a functional benefit for my clients is that they create a path to take their business forward. Whilst an emotional benefit would be that they feel more energised about their business, they feel supported and not so alone.

Functional	Emotional



Lastly,

What are the visuals that best sum up your brand? Get going on Google Image with the old adage that a picture can speak a thousand words.

We will look at applying the results of your brand thoughts to creating cracking brand messages in the next couple of steps. At this point start to consider, from what you have pulled out so far, what your brand needs to communicate more of and less of in the future.

More:

Less:

Having done these exercises I hope you see how you can bring more clarity and 'oomph' to your brand as a result. If you have got any questions on branding please do drop me an email at georgina@georginawalsh.com, I will always be pleased to hear from you and will always reply.



Step Five

Create Compelling Customer Groups

Now that you have thought about your brand let's look at your wonderful customers.

We are going to look at your two biggest types or groups of customers...these should be the two main groups that you would be serving as part of your vision, so not necessarily the ones you work with now.

They should be the ones that you just love (or would love) to work with. Those that energise and enliven you.

On the back of your goal setting in Step Three you may have planned to, (or already gone out to) talk to customers in more detail. The better you know your customers – really know them – the more successful you will be. As with the branding this includes thinking about their emotions too (don't worry, not all of their emotions!...but those that relate to the area you are working in).

So, here is a simple exercise to help you to get to know the customers you want more of, better.

- 1. Identify two main groups** – these should not be simply by location or size of customer, try to do it by their main problems, their main need or their behaviours. For example one of my customer groups is called **Freedom** – these are people who have broken out from the corporate world and have started their own business to live life on their own terms.
- 2. Think about** what you do know about them, and what you don't know but would like to know.
- 3. Do some research!** Use the internet but importantly think about who you could talk to. Make sure you are prepared; draft a simple question guide, and don't try to catch people on the fly. Ensure you make pre-arranged telephone calls or arrange to meet for a coffee.

Try to find out about their problems, needs and wants, e.g. my Freedom group often find they are lacking knowledge in a particular area. Also, that they can



get bogged down in things and can't see the wood for the trees, in turn this causes them to be increasingly reactive rather than proactive and the work-life balance they were hoping for, by leaving the corporate world, is still elusive. Phew...that was a long sentence, but I hope that you get the idea!

4. Feed these thoughts back into your vision, business plan and brand. How does this change or alter what you need to do to get, and keep, those two customer groups as your main customers?



Step Six

Craft Super Strong Key Messages

For each of the two customer groups you looked at in Step Five, I want you to come up with 3 core messages – there may be an overlap with the messages to each group, but do look at each group separately.

These core messages are not how they will appear when you communicate with your customers but you will use them to guide you in the content of your communication.

If we take my Freedom group again as an example, let's look at one of their key problems:

Their problem: Bogged down, can't see the wood for the trees, reactive rather than proactive leading to a bad work-life balance (and possibly a bad bank balance too).

3 core messages:

1. Clarity of direction helps you become proactive rather than reactive.
2. You are much more energised when you enjoy what you do.
3. A clear brand positioning is a basis for clarity and action, e.g.
 - It articulates why your offering is different
 - It helps you deliver the right tone of voice for the right customers
 - It gives clarity and helps build your goals to take you forward

Now have a think about your customers:

Your Core Group:

Their Main Problem(s):

Your Core Messages:



Now you need to link your brand to your customers – what are the key on-brand messages in light of that?

For example, here are some sentences where one of my core messages has been combined with what I do and the feel of my brand tone of voice.

For example, my core message of: “Clarity of direction helps you become proactive rather than reaction”, might be expressed as:

“Together we’ll create your vibrant vision and build a laser-sharp action plan to get you on the front foot.”

Or something a bit less specific, which talks to their emotions, such as “You have lots of drive but you still feel stuck? Let me help you leap forward....”

I hope you get the idea. Have fun with this and play around with different ways of expressing your core messages in an ‘on brand’ way. The more you practice the better you will get.

In Six Steps we have come a long way from looking at what are the most important things in your life, to boosting extra life into your brand and thinking about the most important messages you need to be communicating to your key customer groups. Now for the final step.....



Step Seven

Pull it All Together!

Right, we are on the home straight. There are various things you need to do to build your brand and ensure your business is buzzing, flourishing and effortlessly moving up a gear.

Here is a list of headings to help you think about what you want your messages to do to move your customers towards a sale (in addition to the core message areas we talked about in Step Six – so much for each sentence to do!!).

These may well link to the goals you created earlier in Step Three e.g. increase the number of customer, increase the spend per customer, raise awareness of what your business does.

So, what I want you to do in this step is think about where you are now with different customer groups and what you need to do, e.g:

- **Raise awareness of your brand:** Have they heard of you? Do they know what you are about? Why you are different?
- **Create a need:** Are you in a new territory? Do people know they have this need yet? Why should they buy in to what you are telling them? How will it make their life better?
- **Solve a problem:** What is it? What is the immediate and wider impact this problem has on your customers? How do you help solve it and what are the benefits to them?
- **Build a brand:** They may have heard of you, but do they actually understand what you stand for, why they should use you over others?
- **Deliver a call to action:** Your previous messages may have done all the above but are your customer's buying from you? What do you want them to do to start talking to you, exploring your offering, buying from you or buying more from you?

Bringing it all Together with the Customer Journey

Often you have to take a customer through various stages until they are ready to buy from you for a first time, and then a second and so on.



This is often called the **Customer Journey**. Think about the messages you need to communicate to guide your customer through this journey. If we take a simple example one business may concentrate on the following four steps.

1. Help customer's understand a specific need they have.
2. Show them how the benefits of the product can meet this need.
3. Raise awareness of the qualities of the brand and why it is suited to them.
4. Entice customers to buy with a call to action.

Going straight in with Step 4 of a call to action to buy is unlikely to work, but laying the ground work with clear, branded communications helps to guide the customer to a buying decision that makes sense for them.

You may like to start building a communications plan by creating a simple grid or mind map which has the following areas:

Who you want to speak to

What you want to say to them

When you are going to do it

How you are going to talk to them (e.g. Step 1 maybe an email to introduce yourself, Step 2 a follow up telephone call, Step 3 a face to face meeting. Each stage will be a different part of the customer journey with slightly different key messages)

Make sure you put lashings of your brand values and personality into your communications!

So, sadly we are at the end of this e-book. Thank you so much for reading it. I hope it has proved fruitful, enlightening and leads to business invigoration.

There are so many other aspects of invigorating a business that we could look at and also other areas of coaching that we could explore, but that is for another day....however, as a...

**Have fun putting these 7 steps
into practice!**



Want to know more about Georgina?

You only get one life. I'm living mine like I mean it.

It's the smaller, smarter steps that create the biggest leaps in business. My goal is to spark brighter focus, more business breakthroughs and lots of reasons for you to pop the champagne.

I believe that life is too short to put up with anything less than a thriving business and career you love.



This is a lesson I've lived and learnt many times over in my own business journey. A journey that has taken me all over the world.

Now I've almost come full circle, back to where my family have lived for over 400 years; immersed in the rolling hills of Northern Ireland, my family and other animals, a buzzing business.....and probably a few too many parties. For me, it's perfection!

Life is busy, fun and ever surprising. And when it isn't, I transform it. My goal is to help my clients do the same. You only get one go at it, so why not max it?

I'm passionate about small business and entrepreneur success, and want to do everything I can to help people succeed. Look out for my articles and offers to help you move your business forward towards greater and greater success.

My approach is a blend of branding, business psychology and coaching influenced by a 25 year career working with some of the world's leading brands and companies. Companies I've worked with include Shell, Unilever, Volkswagen and the University of Oxford.

I am (deep breath) an Accredited Associate Coach with the International Coaching Federation, I have an Advanced Diploma in Performance Coaching, an MSc in Business Psychology and a Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing. But thankfully, I'm currently taking a rest from exams!

