

# SUPERCHARGE YOUR BUSINESS

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**Action  
COACH**  
BUSINESS COACHING

**04**

GET TO  
GRIPS WITH  
STREETWISE  
MARKETING

**8**

TIPS TO NAIL  
YOUR NEXT  
PRESENTATION

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HOW TO BE  
A BETTER  
LEADER DURING  
UNCERTAIN  
TIMES

**15**

MASTER  
THE ART OF  
CLOSING  
A DEAL



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Clare Garrod, Stonewall Security



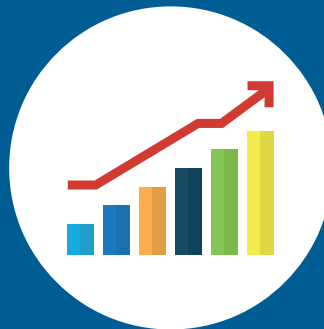
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*\*Findings of July 2019 survey of 349 UK ActionCOACH clients by independent research agency, WorkBuzz.*

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**W**elcome to the *Supercharge Your Business* report, brought to you by *What Franchise* and ActionCOACH.

There's no denying that we're living through unprecedented times. And while how we live, work, shop and communicate have all been altered, one area that has undoubtedly gone through a monumental transformation is the world of business. Business owners recognise that the direction and vision of their enterprises will need to shift, and they're going to need to be agile when it comes to adapting.

So, while right now is a key moment in the trajectory of your business, we thought we'd team up with business growth specialist, ActionCOACH, to create this digital toolkit to not only recalibrate how your business functions, but to help supercharge it and ensure that your organisation, SME or enterprise

emerges stronger than ever.

In this report, ActionCOACH provides expert advice on subjects such as writing a winning business plan, harnessing the latest digital marketing tips, ways to motivate a remote team, and more.



To your success,

*James*

Head of Content  
*What Franchise*

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# How to use streetwise marketing to grow your business

Create a trackable and scaleable marketing strategy with these essential tips

WORDS BY MARK DILKS



## THE AUTHOR

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**T**he golfing analogy 'drive for show, putt for dough' perfectly encapsulates how business owners should approach their marketing strategy right now. In the past, people would have spent a lot of money on what we call 'brand building marketing', whereas right now, more than ever, it's got to be about getting people to initiate a purchase.

The difference between streetwise marketing and brand building marketing is that streetwise marketing will generate a measurable return on investment. Essentially, you've got to be able to track your marketing activity – it's no longer about just getting eyeballs, it's all about getting the transaction.

In my eyes, any strategy that establishes a call to action and builds

a transaction is a good thing. Despite the current situation we're in, people haven't simply stopped buying – actually, there are some businesses thriving right now. So, with that being said, now is the time to double your marketing; your business really needs to stand out.

As of late, I've personally stepped up with my own marketing: it's never been so cheap and I'm getting a lot more cut through now than I ever have and also getting a lot more engagement.

Here are some steps to follow to ensure you're marketing your business in the most efficient way possible:

## 1 Step it up a gear

You need to treat your marketing budget as an investment rather than a cost: it's an investment to get a return further down the line. Businesses that are cutting their investments right now are being rather short-sighted. At a time when people are stepping back from their marketing, media owners are craving people to step forward and create valuable content.

Ensure you have a scaleable and predictable marketing programme. Imagine there was a magical cash machine that operated in a different way to how a typical ATM would. With this cash machine, instead of entering your bank card, you put £20 into it and every time you do that, you received £50 in return. Ask yourself the question: how many times would you put £20 into that magical cash machine? You'd put in as many £20 notes as you can find, right? Your marketing needs to be exactly the same.

## 2 Marketing is just a numbers game

I've been lucky enough to have ran some of the world's biggest marketing budgets. I worked for Audi and launched cars for a living; I was the marketing director running across Europe, the Middle East and Africa for ExxonMobil and ran a \$100m annual marketing budget. A lot of my previous work involved building brand awareness as opposed to building transactions. Business owners need to understand the numbers that sit behind their marketing activity.

One thing to get to grips with early on in the process is to understand what the return on investment is. Measure it using metrics like cost-per-lead and cost-per-customer. If you know those numbers, it's then predictable and scaleable: you then have access to that proverbial cash machine. You're now in that advantageous position where you know that if it costs you £20 to buy a customer and you get a return of £50, you'll keep spending the money wisely and driving more investment.

## 3 You must have multiple marketing strategies

It pays dividends to build up to at least 10 marketing strategies for your business. At ActionCOACH, we call it

***"You need to treat your marketing budget as an investment rather than a cost"***



the rule of 10x10. Many clients when we first start working with them have one or two lead generation strategies: what would happen if one of those disappeared? Traditional advertising has dried up, so you need to pivot your marketing. That means having multiple strategies online and to build a lead funnel. Establish who your target audience is; whether you understand them clearly; what your unique selling point (USP) is. It's a 35-hour exercise to build a compelling USP and again the rewards for our clients of completing that are immense.

People have stacks of time and are content hungry right now, so you need to be abundant: share your knowledge; share your expertise. Savvy business owners are now getting to grips with numerous digital tools by hosting online seminars, developing film-making and editing skills and posting movies on YouTube, and learning how to best use Facebook Live and cultivate huge audiences.

Over the next few months, a whole lot of people are going to build formidable audiences. Just the other week a fellow ActionCOACH business growth specialist created a Facebook Live initiative and grew his audience from zero to 10,000 people tuning in every day. So now is the time to create communities; you can't afford to be passive. Whether you're creating an audiobook or webinar, make sure you promote the channel properly. Facebook advertising has never been as



cheap as it is currently. It's important to recognise that Facebook isn't just business to consumer – I'm using it on a B2B level currently, and my cost-per-lead on there right now is about £2.

Another effective marketing strategy is to find out where your ideal customers are hanging out. Join the groups they're part of and start sharing your content. Once you've established that connection you can then entice them to your own dedicated group. Post on social media between one and four times every day – posting less or more can be harmful, according

to research conducted by the social media specialist Hubspot.

## 4 Make sure you have a fully functioning website

And not just a fully functioning one, but one which is optimised for Google. Having a website is one thing, but if people can't find it, you're wasting your time. It's like having a car showroom on Park Lane – lots of people will be driving past but at the end of the day, they can't really come in.

Not only does it need to be discoverable, but it also needs lots of doors and calls to action, as well as clear signposting of your social media accounts.

## 5 The importance of a call to action

Once you have a great website and lots of marketing strategies established, it's absolutely essential you move that engaged audience from one place to another to create the transaction.

If you're smart, you can use communication to segue from online to offline. The most effective way is by pushing people into a dedicated social media group, as mentioned above. An alternative tool is to get people attending a Zoom webinar or chat, and from that you will have generated an email mailing list – utilise this list and ensure you engage with the participants and follow up on whether you can help them with anything. Send them an email inviting them for a consultation or to leave an online review. Let them know how you can solve their problems – in an uncertain world, people are looking for certainty and direction.



# Eight ways you can motivate your remote workforce

As more teams work from home, keeping motivation and productivity high should be at the forefront of every manager's to-do list

WORDS BY JENNI MORGAN



## THE AUTHOR

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**T**he outbreak of coronavirus and subsequent lockdown meant the business world needed to swiftly adapt to working from home. It's something that I have always allowed my team to do because there are some real benefits that come along with the model.

## Mutually beneficial

Working from home demonstrates a mutual trust, which pays back in spades; teams often work harder and go the extra mile when given the opportunity to do so. It also allows a better work-life balance, because individuals can organise their work schedule around other commitments, such as parenting.

Working from home can also be a very useful tool for focusing, because it removes other distractions and allows you to zone-in on the task at hand. Then there are also the environmental and financial benefits of not commuting to an office every day.

## Unforeseen challenges

That being said, there are certainly difficulties that can emerge if remote working isn't handled correctly. Isolation can set in, and there's a risk of teams becoming a group of individuals rather than a cohesive team.

It can also exacerbate problems that emerged within the office and are then left unchecked. If a manager doesn't trust their team to work effectively from home, for example, then they'll imagine scenarios where teams avoid checking-in and completing the tasks at hand.

Because of these challenges, it's important to know what you can do as a manager to motivate your team and make the most of the situation.

## 1 Watercooler talk

In an office environment, it's easy to check-in with your team and see how they're doing each day. In fact, you can often tell this just from how

they walk into the office, or the first few words they say in the morning.

Working remotely doesn't have a ready-made check-in, so you need to deliberately do it daily and make sure the tools are in place for your team to let you know how they're feeling. This then highlights how crucial active listening is as a manager, because it's your responsibility to ascertain if your team needs further support.

## 2 The three O's

Make sure to use the three O's, which stand for outcomes, others, and ourselves.





Focus on outcomes, so for every meeting you put in place, you and your team know what's expected as a result.

When it comes to others, look at everybody else and ask yourself how you can engage them. Make sure that everybody has a chance to input, and that everyone feels included in the current project.

For the 'ourselves' section of the three O's, it's all about evaluating your previous beliefs and assumptions around working from home, and seeing how they will impact the current situation. If you feel you can't trust your team to remain productive, look at why that might be, and make sure to address the problem as soon as possible.

### 3 Constant communication

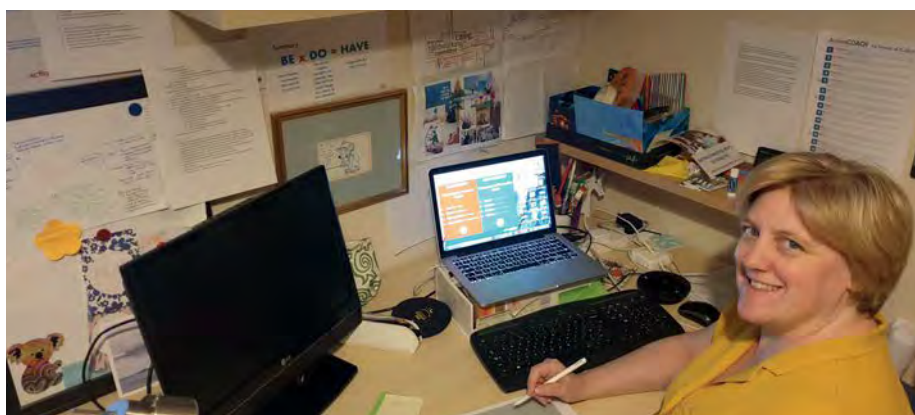
As humans, we feel the need to fill vacuums. If a manager isn't communicating with their team, then the team might jump to conclusions about furloughs, redundancies, or any other worst-case-scenarios.

A good start would be to have team meetings at the beginning and end of every week, and put daily check-ins in place so that each member of the team can update on what they've completed so far, and what they have planned for the rest of their schedule.

### 4 Plan SMART

Don't just look for outcomes; link outcomes to specific goals, so that progression is clear. Make sure to set SMART goals like you might in the office, and do this every time a new task is given to members of the team.

Also think about how this task can be measured, so that a discussion



can be had afterwards if improvements are needed, or celebration is in order for surpassed goals.

### 5 Keep it tailored

Have a conversation with each member of your team to learn about which method of communication works best for them. If they'd prefer a video chat then make sure regular one-to-ones are put in place, or if they're having a bad hair day and would rather not be seen, then make sure you can accommodate an alternative.

### 6 Build trust

This is a constant purpose for you as a manager, but is also great for the team. Everybody needs to have a shared understanding of the end goal, and each individual's role to achieve that.

Once you have the right systems in place to track goals, make sure to praise team members publicly if they've done a particularly good job, and provide feedback to an individual in private if there is room for improvement. This is something you'd already do in an office environment, so don't change it just because you're now working remotely.

### 7 Measure progress

KPIs and measures are as important when working remotely as when working in an office – perhaps even more so. People love to know they're doing a good job, and mutually understanding how that will be tracked, and involving your team members in reporting, is a great way to keep productivity high.

***"Teams often work harder and go the extra mile when given the opportunity to do so"***

If you normally had a weekly one-to-one with each of your team, why would you stop doing that just because you're working remotely? Routines are important, and it's your job to make sure there's a sense of routine amongst your team members.

### 8 Choose your tech wisely

There are so many options when it comes to staying in touch with your team, whether that's Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, emails, shared files – the list goes on.

Make sure your team is all coordinated on the method of communication you'll be using, and that everyone is trained and up to speed.



# Seven ways to nail your next presentation

Make sure you're prepared and confident, and soon you'll be presenting with passion

WORDS BY KEVIN RILEY



## THE AUTHOR

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**P**resentations are an unavoidable part of business development, and are often one of the best ways to convey complex information about either your business or processes in a memorable, consumable way.

However, presenting in front of an audience, either large or small, has sometimes been a source of anxiety and challenge for individuals – even for those who are many years into their career. Practice makes perfect, and knowing which aspects of your presentation to prioritise can make all the difference.

## 1 Be considerate

You need to respect your audience's time, and give them the consideration that you'd expect in return. In order to factor this into your presenting, make sure to take a moment to think about what the audience wants, and how you can engage them for the duration of your presentation.

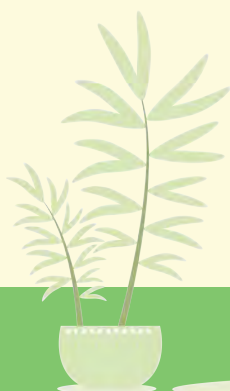
As with your business, not every solution will work for every problem. The same occurs when presenting, in that not every presentation style or method of delivery will be suited to each and every environment you might find yourself in. Some instances will necessitate a more hands-on, one-to-one approach, whereas a conference session at a large event might require a more rhetorical style.

It's important to consider this before you even start planning the topics and content you may cover, because the context of delivery can – and should – dictate how the presenter lays-out the rest of their session.

Once this has been established, put together a rough outline of how you want to begin, at least three topics you will plan on covering, and then how you'd like to end. More on this later, but the ending of your presentation should always wrap-around to the beginning.

## 2 Be prepared

When I first joined ActionCOACH, I realised I would be presenting to audiences on a regular basis about the problems the services solve for business owners. I'd of course never done a presentation on ActionCOACH before, so I was met with the challenge of talking about a





topic that didn't come naturally to me. How did I overcome it? I overprepared.

In the initial planning stages of a presentation, you should make sure you do plenty of research and overprepare as much as possible. That way, you prepare for all eventualities and can remain confident you have control. You also remove any fears, which allows you to stay confident and on-topic.

## **"You need to respect your audience's time, and give them the consideration that you'd expect in return"**

### **3 Be structured**

Part of ensuring confidence is knowing exactly what you're going to say, and when you're going to say it. This goes hand-in-hand with having a firm structure to your presentation, which will allow you to convey all of the information you'd like, in a coherent and approachable way.

Always start with a strong opener, because you have around 10 seconds to hook your audience before they

switch off. Ask a question at the beginning, introduce yourself with a strong statement, or reference a famous quote. You'll grip your audience, which will then let you seamlessly transition into the main topic you'll be covering throughout your presentation.

You then want to develop three outcomes, which you'll introduce as part of the opening section. By

introducing these early, you prepare your audience and help them set their own goals from the session. That way, they can begin formulating questions and familiarise themselves with the focus of your session.

Finally, by the end, you'll want to return to the main point you set-out in your introduction. This gives your presentation a firm sense of conclusion, and cements the outcomes you covered in the mind of your audience.

### **4 Be involved**

In order to deliver an engaging presentation, you must involve your audience. This should be at regular intervals, in order to keep them on their toes. If you save all interaction until the end, you risk the audience switching off or not being as engaged as they could be.

It's good to ask questions and involve the audience at appropriate times. Make sure these questions prompt them to think, and aren't simply intended for the audience to stick their arms up as a tally.

### **5 Be proactive**

Retention is a big part of effective presenting, because a presentation is irrelevant if the information conveyed is forgotten soon after it's delivered.

For the best follow-up possible, encourage the audience to note down the actions they are planning to take as a result of the information you've given them. This way, you're guaranteeing your content prompts tangible action, and isn't simply a way to fill some time.

### **6 Be confident**

Confidence is key when presenting, and it's easy to lose confidence if you fail to prepare or approach your presentation from the wrong angle. You could go completely blank, or talk about what you feel is important, rather than what your audience might be looking for.

Ultimately, the words you use only account for seven per cent of the engagement; it's about your body language (55 per cent) and the tonality (38 per cent) throughout. Those come with confidence, and confidence comes with being as prepared as possible.

### **7 Learn before you earn**

What did I do to learn how to present? I hired a world-class coach, of course! There's a famous book called *You Can't Teach a Kid to Ride a Bike At a Seminar* by David

Sandler - I believe books and seminars on their own are helpful, but not enough to master most things and that includes every aspect of your business.



# How to write a foolproof business plan

Creating the perfect plan isn't the only key to success – you need to follow it, too!

WORDS BY LAURIE GRIFFIN



## THE AUTHOR

Laurie Griffin is a business planning expert in ActionCOACH's UK support team

**E**verybody makes and follows plans for their meals and weekends, so when you stop and think about it, it's crazy to think about how few business owners follow a plan for the growth of their company. In fact, statistics show as low as three per cent of businesses in the U.K. actually have a written business plan that they work from.

## The essential ingredient

Business owners who have a strong understanding of the financial drivers of their business are best placed to use their resources profitably and adapt to constantly changing times.

Beyond that deep understanding, a world-class business growth specialist helps their business owner client understand and work on the small incremental steps that will take them to the big vision of where they see their business in five years' time.

**"My five-year goal is to be one of the UK's top 100 accountancy practices. Before ActionCOACH, I would never have even thought about a goal like this. Now, I've planned it. I know exactly what I have to do, and when I need to do it" - Sam Rollins, Trinity Accountants**

## Cohesion is key

The best business plans help each of the different departments within an organisation align with one another. Your business needs buy-in from each team member, so everybody,

together, is working toward achieving the eventual vision.

When executed correctly, a business plan will help you to uncover the unthought-of ideas and different routes to market. It will help to upturn every stone, check around every corner, and make your business bulletproof.

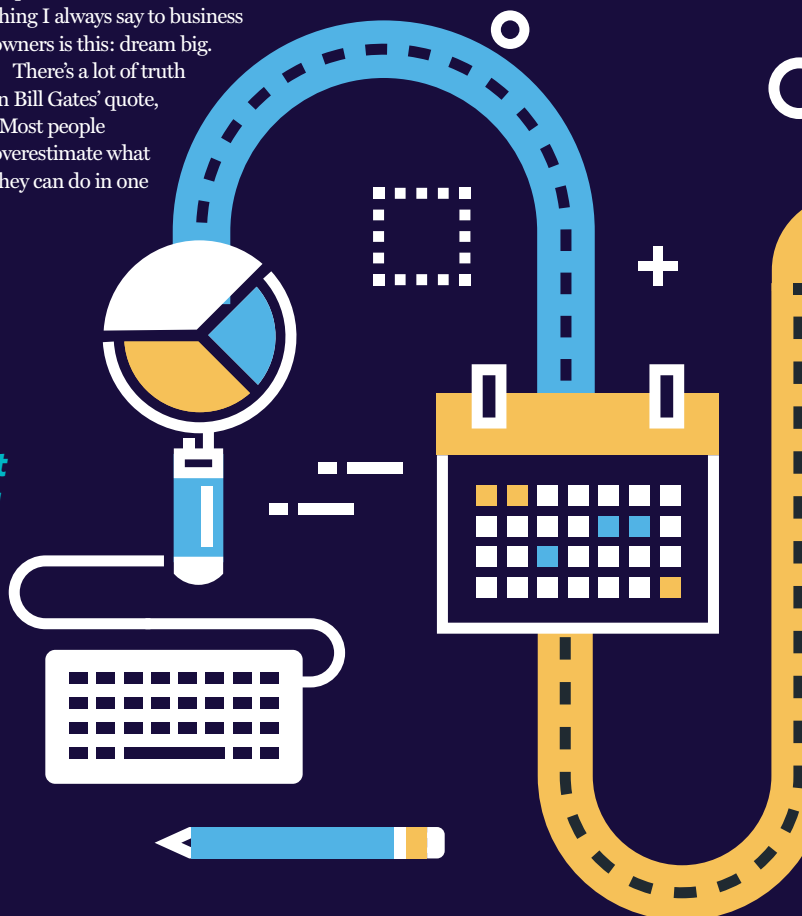
## Looking at the long-term

Looking five years down the line can can evoke feelings of both excitement and anxiety, especially in these unprecedented times. However, the thing I always say to business owners is this: dream big.

There's a lot of truth in Bill Gates' quote, "Most people overestimate what they can do in one

year, and underestimate what they can do in 10 years." By constantly monitoring and realigning during the five- to 10-year timeframe, getting the business to its most profitable and valuable state is achievable.

Now, more than ever, business owners need to be working on their business every week so they emerge fitter, faster, and stronger. It's all about evolution. By implementing a succession of business growth strategies in each of the 21 building blocks of a great business, the cumulative gains end up making a



## HERE'S WHAT SOME OF OUR CLIENTS SAY

"I began working with ActionCOACH to help me refine and implement our business plan. Cartridge World- Middleton was a start-up franchise. Two years later, we acquired another business and doubled in size."

- **Bill Fox, Owner, Cartridge World**

"I highly recommend ActionCOACH for ANY business that wants to be/stay ahead of the competition."

- **Dr. Kristine Collins**

"It opened my eyes up to the real world. I now know what I am doing and I know I am on track. Failing to plan is planning to fail."

- **Joe Papiccio, Plumbing Bros**

massive difference to the profitability and value of your business.

Tools like our cash flow analysis software help our business owner clients to see exactly how to improve their business.

### It all comes together

The best business plans are a living, breathing, moving piece of the puzzle that is constantly updated and used as a point of reference for how to develop your business.

It can also change

depending on what phase your business is at, but whether you're a start-up or an established business working with a world-class business growth specialist and gaining access to the best planning and financial analysis tools will undoubtedly help; in my previous roles at Manchester United and Chelsea FC, everyone understood the need to hire the best coaches and use the most

advanced analysis software - it's surprising to me how few business owners have

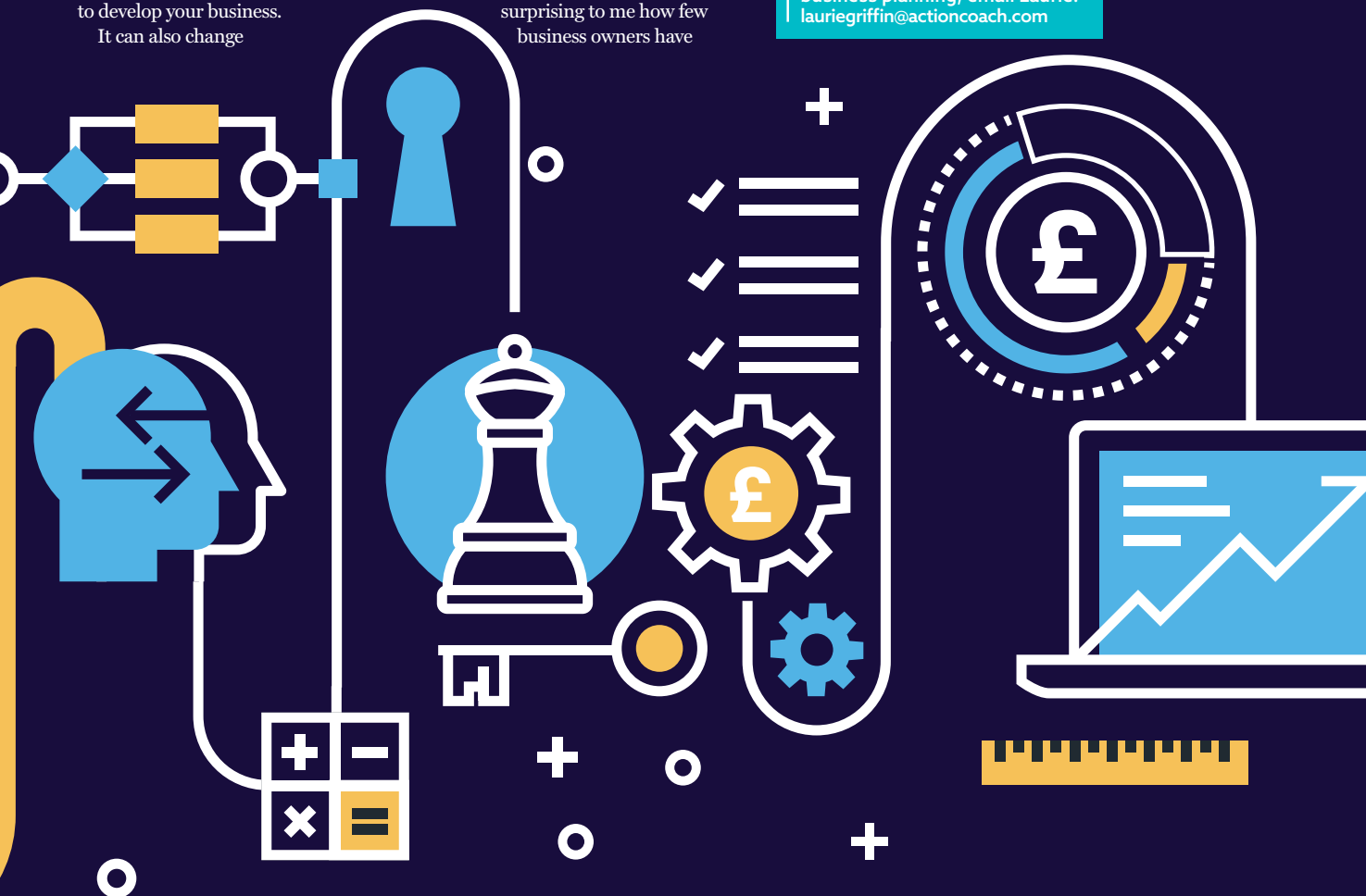
***"In my previous roles at Man United and Chelsea FC, everyone understood the need to hire the best coaches and use the most advanced analysis software"***

come to the same realisation.

I'm seeing banks come in for a lot of criticism for rejecting loan applications, and I think that's unfair criticism. The business owner still needs to demonstrate a strong understanding of the financial workings of their business and when and how they'll be able to return that capital, irrespective of what's going on in the world.

Our team offers a range of solutions, bank funding plans, and analysis software so that business owners can go into those conversations confidently armed with all the answers that a lender is looking for.

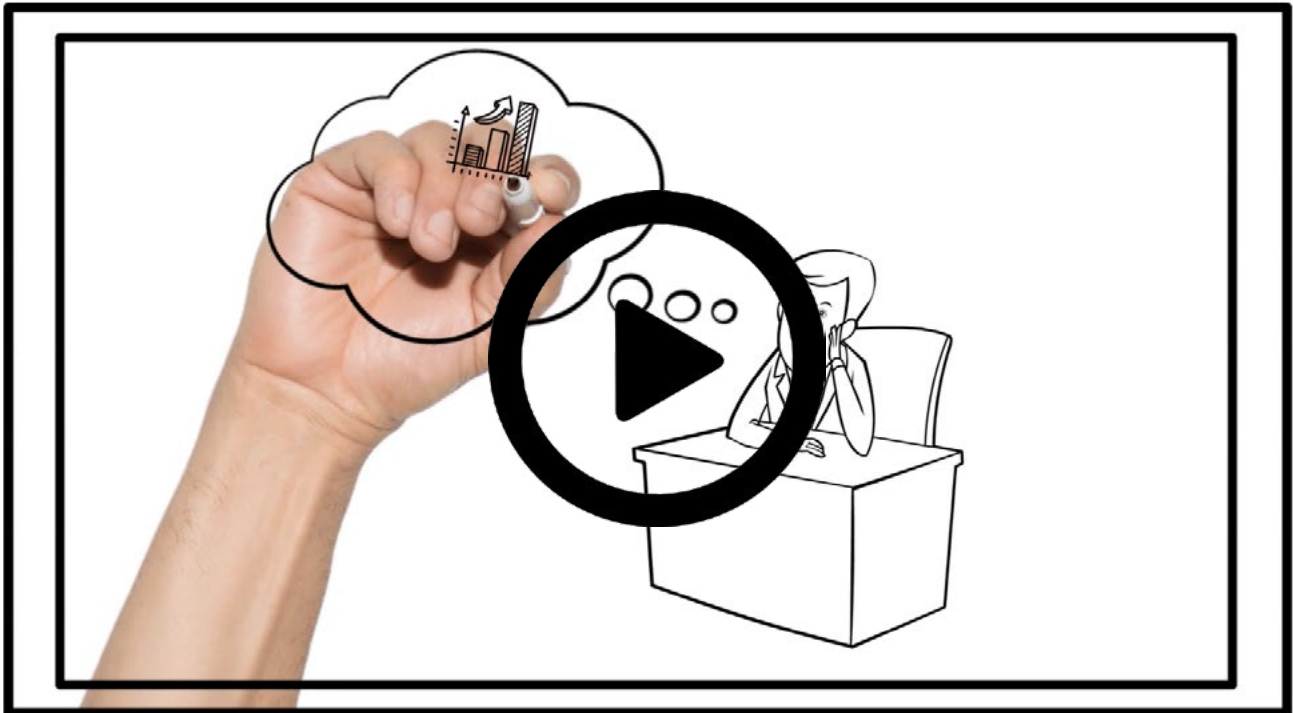
To find out more about business planning, email Laurie: [lauriegriffin@actioncoach.com](mailto:lauriegriffin@actioncoach.com)





# 6 Steps to Massive Results

Find out how to build a business that works so you don't have to! Click below to watch the video.



**We guarantee ActionCOACH will work for you, but it does require participation. Take the next step to grow your business today. Here's what YOU will get from your Business Growth Specialist:**

- ✓ Guaranteed extra profits (ask us about the Ts & Cs)
- ✓ A significant competitive advantage in your market
- ✓ A team you can rely on
- ✓ Access to 3,500 strategies and tactics to grow your business
- ✓ More time to enjoy your life
- ✓ And ultimately a business you can sell

With more than 200 coaches in the UK and over 1,000 worldwide, ActionCOACH delivers its proven business development systems to tens of thousands of business owners every week; owners who turn to business coaching to get the freedom and lifestyle they sought when they first went into business. Just take a look at our latest UK Client Satisfaction Survey results on the right, (conducted by independent research agency, Work Buzz).

**96%**  
of clients would recommend ActionCOACH to a friend or business associate 

**98%**   
of clients said their Action Coach makes a positive difference to their lives

**Find out how this could work for you by emailing the word 'more' to:  
[freedom@actioncoach.com](mailto:freedom@actioncoach.com)**

# How to integrate technology into your business

Services like video conferencing and chatbots aren't just options anymore – they need to be essentials for any successful brand

WORDS BY GARY KEATING



## THE AUTHOR

Gary Keating is a business coach for ActionCOACH Bristol, and can be contacted at [garykeating@action-coach.com](mailto:garykeating@action-coach.com)

**T**echnology isn't just something that businesses can choose to engage with as and when they see fit. It has become an intrinsic part of the modern working world, and that's never been more apparent than in these current times, when assets like video conferencing are quickly replacing the previous status quo.

Virtual is the new normal, and businesses should engage with technology from many different angles. Whether it's virtual conferencing or blockchain technology, it's always about making the customer's experience streamlined, authentic, and predictable.

## Unstoppable change

It's been interesting to chart how businesses have slowly integrated more and more technological solutions. One of the biggest changes most would have noticed is the shift from taking bags of expense receipts to your accounting team, to having those processes uploaded to services such as SAGE and Xero.

This may seem like a strange example, but it exemplifies the ways in which technology should solve problems: it reduced unnecessary admin and busywork, so that more important aspects – such as business development, training, and client acquisition – can be prioritised.

In recent years, one of the big changes in technology has been how ubiquitous it has become.

By this, I mean businesses making the most of

globalisation, and models that would have been previously restricted to the vast multinational corporations.

For example, I have a client who has 40 people in the Philippines making phone calls and appointments; this isn't a vast offshore customer service department that would have been created solely for use by a large corporation, but is instead the kind of service available to all SMEs today.

***“People buy the technology without initially buying the advice, and I think in today's landscape, the advice can be far more important”***

## Choices and chatbots

When it comes to the types of technology that businesses should be engaging with, the answer really is innumerable. Social media, email marketing, and podcasts can all be essential tools for both business development, as well as internal communication – particularly the latter – as more and more businesses start producing in-house podcasts to keep teams up-to-date with goings-on and changes.

Perhaps one of the most exciting pieces of tech we'll soon see



become a crucial part of a brand's strategy is the chatbot. Soon, brands won't be able to proceed with their online presence without having a chatbot available for users of their site. People are becoming less willing to pick up the phone and have a lengthy conversation, so these chatbots will fill that gap and make the end-user experience a convenient and fulfilling one.

Alongside chatbots, the current global crisis has proven that people often opt for video calling somebody – whether a client, customer, or just a friend – over a regular phone call. This aligns with the need for human interaction, and a video conference allows more personable and meaningful interaction than a phone call could ever offer.

### The bigger picture

All of these elements of technological integration aren't going to operate

***"Brands won't be able to proceed with their online presence without having a chatbot available for users of their site"***

in isolation, of course. Soon, we'll be seeing chatbots combined with video calls, so a customer can come to your site, begin a conversation with a representative, and then see that representative face-to-face to continue the sale, negotiation, or whatever it is they are hoping to get out of that interaction.

Not too long ago, for example, I was visiting one of my business clients, and as I entered their office, I was greeted by a friendly receptionist on a screen. She asked if I would like a coffee and all of the usual conversation, and then prompted me

to join the meeting in another room.

Once in the meeting, I asked where the receptionist was located in the building, and was informed that she was in a centre in Manila, in the Philippines. So while it appears that she's sat in an office in the UK, she's actually thousands of miles away and working remotely.

While Zoom and Skype and other video conferencing services are huge now, we'll soon have smaller, more convenient versions of these concepts appear alongside chatbots on websites, so customers can get that one-to-one interaction which drives growth.

### The right solution

There are certainly obstacles and challenges to avoid when integrating technology into your business's processes. These pitfalls mainly come from the fact that there's so much software available, and everybody selling it will tell you it can solve any issue imaginable.

This is one of the biggest problems I'm seeing SMEs come up against: they haven't decided what the problem they're having is, or what kind of solution they would like, and so they end up with 500 different apps that are all supposed to change the way they operate. People buy the technology without initially buying the advice, and I think in today's landscape, the advice can be far more important.

Ultimately, it always comes down to pairing technology with the right kind of advice. That way, a business can get the kind of outcome it's looking for, and not just end up with a piece of technology that solves a problem they were never having, or fails to mitigate a challenge that's really impacting their day-to-day operations.





# How to master the art of closing a sales deal

Make sure your deal draws to a positive conclusion and avoids detrimental stumbling blocks with these expert tips

WORDS BY MITALI CHOPRA



## THE AUTHOR

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**1 Always ask for the sale**  
As simple as it sounds, one problem many salespeople encounter when trying to close a sale is that they don't actually ask for a sale at the end of the process. A lot of people will showcase their solution and leave it to the prospect to come back to them. Fear of rejection or jeopardising the relationship are some of the reasons why this happens. The reluctance to ask for the sale sometimes leads to delays or even loss of sale. The next most common reason is they haven't developed, scripted and rehearsed the best way to ask.

**2 Make sure that the decision-maker is in the room**  
A common observation during the sales process is the decision-makers are not fully engaged. No matter how good your solution is, things will not move forward if they're not present. The best way to ensure they're involved is to identify who will make the overall decision early on in the process. Don't be shy to ask: 'Who will



***"Quite often these deals can stumble on communication gap issues, which is avoidable by having the proper stakeholder list established on both sides"***

be involved in the decision-making process?' Usually, when you ask that question, someone will come forward, and then it's critical to involve them

every step of the way.

Depending on the complexity and magnitude of the deal, all of the stakeholders will need to be involved, including the enablers and the influencers. It is always a good idea to list these stakeholders so there is a complete team alignment. Quite often these deals can stumble on communication gap issues, which is avoidable by having the proper stakeholder list established on both sides. In all likelihood you will be introducing a function specialist, a technical specialist and other members of your team to ensure the process is executed properly, but while doing this, it's important that there is always one single point of contact who is orchestrating the whole deal.

**3 Focus on the solution, not yourself**  
Another pitfall I see all too often is when a salesperson



focuses heavily on their own business. This often comes in the guise of pushing the fact you work for a family business, you've been around for over 50 years, etcetera. The problem is the person on the other side is only looking for what's in it for them.

It's important to remember a sale is not about how good you are; it's about how good your customers can be with you on their side. I use that mantra a lot when trying to understand what a

***"A sale is not about how good you are; it's about how good your customers can be with you on their side"***

client's challenges are – I never start with what I bring to the table. I want to fully identify what their challenges, problems and issues are, and only

when I can completely comprehend and understand their situation, will I take out my toolkit and show them how I can solve the problems.

This is typically when the conversation will turn to sales, as I'm not technically selling, I'm helping to solve a problem.

The key differentiator between a successful salesperson and an unsuccessful one using the same old script, is the successful person is focused on solving the problem for the customer, whereas the unsuccessful salesperson is more focused on selling the product. That's the difference, and a strong salesperson is a good leader, collaborator and orchestrator, and doesn't just know their products – they get the right person involved, have the right processes established and make sure that, ultimately, the client gets their problem solved.



## SELLING CONUNDRUMS SOLVED

### Phone vs email vs face to face

It's always good to have the first session on the phone, to gain a clear understanding of the client's requirements. Follow up on email to obtain any relevant documents, and then arrange to have the final discussion and decision face to face, which can be easily done via a video conference tool. This all being said, the quality of communication and solution is more important than the communication channels.

What every business needs, though, is to have its own defined sales process. This should be a consistent sales process to go through which addresses what problem is getting solved, what value the customer is getting and identifies the right price point. The most important component, however, is the capability and the credibility of the provider, so the

prospect has full faith.

You can demonstrate credibility through your past achievements, case studies, testimonials, Google rankings and reviews. Also, through the kind of team that you are part of – the team's previous experience, knowledge and strengths adds to your overall credibility. Capability is solving their problem with your solution and demonstrating you have the infrastructure and resources to deliver it.

### Persistence: yay or nay?

If you believe in your solution and products, there's no reason why you shouldn't be persistent, as it's something that will help the customer to get a problem solved. If you're not being persistent, you're doing a disservice to the future client. It can sometimes be mistaken with pushiness, but it's all about taking things to a logical

conclusion in agreement with both sides.

### Striking the right tone

Regardless of the current situation, you need to be sensitive and compassionate all of the time. There are situational nuances that need to be taken care of, but the interpretation of the word 'sales', in my experience, can be negative. It's important to understand sales in the right manner and to get to grips with what the notion of sales really is.

The real definition of sales, which we use at ActionCOACH, is 'professionally helping someone to make a buying decision'. All you are doing is helping them to solve a problem – you should stay true to this philosophy as it's your duty to help others with the right product. If your product or service is not worthy of helping someone, then you need to revise the whole business.

# The Formula For CHANGE

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 \text{D} & \times & \text{V} & + & \text{F} & > & \text{R} \\
 \swarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
 \text{Dissatisfaction} & & \text{Vision / Potential} & & \text{First Steps} & & \text{Resistance / Lack of Confidence}
 \end{array}$$

**How likely are you to change your business / life for the better?** Download the report, open it in Adobe and enter your answers to the questions in the boxes. Then score yourself for Dissatisfaction, Vision and Resistance and calculate your score... if it's higher than your resistance, change is more than likely. Therefore, increased levels of dissatisfaction and vision, partnered with taking action through the first steps, will increase your chances of changing your business and life for the better.

What are you most dissatisfied about with your business / your business's impact on your life?

What is your vision/potential?

What do you see as the Number 1 benefit from being Action Coached? (First Steps)

What's your resistance to working on the 6 steps to build the business you want?

What needs to change in your business to give you the success you deserve?

Dissatisfaction	X	Vision / Potential	+	First Steps	=	Your Score	>	Your Resistance to change
0 = I'm staying in my comfort zone 10 = Very dissatisfied		0 = No vision, potential 10 = Detailed, written vision with clear potential		Action's Proven Coaching System		D x V + F		0 = No resistance 100 = Total resistance Is this higher or lower than Your Score?
	X		+	10	=		>	

**Would you like to explore this further?**  
Email this document to [freedom@actioncoach.com](mailto:freedom@actioncoach.com)



# How to be a better leader during these uncertain times

Your business will have gone through drastic changes as of late – here are some top tips to ensure you come out the other side stronger than ever before

WORDS BY SARAH WILLIAMS



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## Leaders must have the ability to communicate clearly

Right now, it's essential business owners are able to outline their strategy, and the strategy must be underpinned by the clear vision that the leader has for their company. This vision needs to take the values that have driven the company to this point into account, while also incorporating new ways of working and behaviours that will drive the business going forward. It's paramount that business leaders articulate clearly the purpose of their organisation and what their company stands for.

## Take action

The ability to assess and make decisions in the face of this unprecedented series of events that we find ourselves in is a real must-have attribute for any leader to possess. Staff and stakeholders expect their leaders to make decisions and to be decisive, and if business owners hadn't realised until this point that this is something they signed up for when they originally created or joined their company, this is their moment of calling. Their teams now expect them to be decisive and to take action. This doesn't necessarily mean the team will expect decisions to be absolutely perfect, but what they will expect is decisive action – I believe that action trumps inaction all day long.

It's important to be consistent with your direction – don't flip-flop around or duck questions, but meet them head on. It's critical to surround yourself with trusted advisers, colleagues and peers that you can align your ideas and

thoughts with – no-one is an island, it's impossible to make all of your decisions alone, so seek out the opinions of others. Once you've done that, and shown you have sought the counsel of other people, it will demonstrate to your team and stakeholders that you're making decisions by using an informed opinion and considering it from all angles.

## Combine courage with empathy

You need to be a leader who represents courage, but vulnerability, too, as it is important in fostering trust. There's not a single person on earth right now that has all of the answers to all of the questions – it's far too difficult and challenging a time – but recognising the impact of the crisis on others, acknowledging those facts, and leading courageously in spite of uncertainty and fears, restores a workforce's belief that they're in safe hands with a leader. Showing you've considered the impact on the team and the overall organisation demonstrates your staff are safe with you and their security is paramount.

## How best to lead a remote team

You must over communicate. Only repetition really gets the message home. There's no doubt that people are dealing with unprecedented times and feeling very different emotions, so it's important that you prioritise communication, no matter how busy you are

and how many spinning plates you're trying to keep from falling. Make sure your messaging is clear, consistent and rhythmical – the business must have its own drumbeat, which should come in the form of a daily, weekly and monthly rhythm.



The daily rhythm can be a quick huddle, where the team comes together and discusses the operations and outlines the priorities for the day ahead. The weekly catch-up is when you can concentrate on the operations in more detail, and a monthly meeting can be a review and also a preview to look at the month ahead and the next quarter.

A leader must be clear on the agenda, the attendance, and how you're going to conduct the meetings. It's also important to make sure your team is comfortable using the technology – up until recently, many people hadn't conducted a single video conference meeting.

What is most important, though, is to check on people's health: how are they finding isolation? How are they managing family, childcare, looking after pets, or homeschooling? Be as flexible as you possibly can – people are struggling to manage their busy workloads and their family lives.

Also, use it as an opportunity

to cherish seeing into people's lives a bit more – we've all had to conduct meetings where somebody's kids or pets have popped into the picture, but as a leader you don't often get to meet your team in their homes, so embrace it!

### **The world has changed, so your business must change too**

We've already seen so many examples of enterprises that have quickly understood this concept. Breweries have switched to manufacturing hand sanitiser, couture companies are making scrubs and gowns, restaurants are no longer serving diners but cooking ready meals for front-line and key workers. The ability for a business to pivot and change is now fundamental. Up until March, one of the biggest challenges we spoke to business owners about was how their team were unable to get change successfully managed – now it's happening in abundance.

At this point in time, many people have adapted quickly

and comfortably with change, so take advantage of that. This is the new normal – it would be foolish to think things will go back to the way they were, so look at how you are going to redesign your business going forward. We've all learned new skills and adapted to fresh ways of working we thought we never would, so run with it and don't shy away from it.

### **Every crisis creates opportunity**

When working with my clients, I've told them to be open-minded to any opportunity that might be around the corner. There will be a new business model that they will have to adapt and approach, and they should accept the change: we're not going back to the way it was. Look for the daily learnings: not every business has won or is winning in the current circumstances – it's so difficult for many businesses – but if you're not a winner, at least make sure you're a learner in this environment.

Make note of what you have learnt during this period. Plan, and then plan again – more than ever, it's important to have a solid plan. Your plan will change – even on a daily basis – but not having one because the future is uncertain is very dangerous.

Finally, as the leader, it's so important to remember to protect your cash. One of the saddest things that we're seeing in the business environment is that many companies have a far bigger cash reserve problem than they do a COVID-19 problem.

As we come through the crisis it is critical the attention on cash stays as a paramount focus: cash reserve must be built into the business for future growth and sustainability.



***“Leading courageously in spite of uncertainty and fears restores a workforce's belief that they're in safe hands with a leader”***