

OVER **THE** LINE

AUTUMN 16

HELPING AMBITIOUS BUSINESS OWNERS ACHIEVE SUCCESS



PUTTING TO WIN

Whilst I'm not THAT interested in golf there's one golfer, Rory McIlroy who has been in the news recently. I couldn't help notice that he caused quite a stir by winning a big golf tournament. All the fuss seemed a bit OTT until I read that he wasn't the world number 1 anymore and that he hadn't actually won anything for 16 months. For someone so talented that's really surprising.

Out of curiosity I delved into the story. The statistics apparently showed him near the top of the tree for every aspect of his game - **except one** - putting. He was near the bottom for that! Herein lies the problem, because to get to the top **you can't afford** to miss when the ball gets to within 10 - 12 feet of the hole. No matter how good the rest of your game is if you're not a top putter you're going to struggle to win. The reality is that putting has **disproportionate** effect on a golfer's score.

This disproportionate effect may seem unfair but it crops up in other sports.... Shot to goal ratio in football.... hitting doubles % in darts.... first serve in % in tennis. And so it is in business too!

To achieve success no matter which sport you're in its imperative to know the few basics in which you simply have to excel in order to succeed. As with Rory McIlroy being brilliant in all the basics except the one that really matters means you don't win and the **same is true in business.**

For most businesses there are loads of things that **could be measured** but in reality there will only be handful that should, to up your game and make it onto the 'must be measured' list.

So what are the key things in your business that will have a disproportionate effect on your end result?

These **KEY MEASURES** will vary from business to business but here are a few that we find tend to more relevant than most.

- **Gross margin %**
- **On time delivery %**
- **Average sales order/invoice value**
- **New customer conversion %**
- **Number of leads & enquiries**
- **Number of sales calls / customer appointments**

Once you know what they are it's imperative that you measure them and monitor your performance consistently. If every week or month the numbers look good then that should give you confidence and peace of mind that the business is heading in the right direction. The reverse is true also so if any of your key numbers aren't healthy then you'll know about it straight away and you can focus on it straight away.

P.S. As it turned out the solution was Rory McIlroy made a slight adjustment to the way he held the putter and hey presto he wins. **Remember practice improves performance!**

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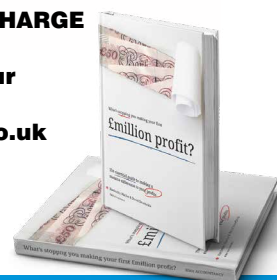
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UPDATE

DRIVING YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH REPORTS

I wonder what it would be like driving a car **without a single dial** on the dashboard? A bit scary I'd imagine. For starters you wouldn't have an idea as to how fast you'd be going nor how much fuel you had left in the tank.



A business not having the right information is the same as someone driving a car without the dials on the dashboard.

For information to be useful, it needs to be relevant, reliable, up to date and crucially in a format that's easy for you to see what's going on under the bonnet of your business.

Xero, the cloud based accountancy software provider, has always prided itself on saving businesses time by making bookkeeping fast and efficient. However, what's likely to have gone unnoticed is the range of upgrades to the reports that are available.

The aim is clearly to provide better reports to help those businesses to see their key numbers more easily and in turn enable them to make better decisions.

For example you can add customisable columns to the new reports to allow you to compare your current results to previous periods and budgets so you can see where you are and if you are on target or not and then you can put corrective measures in place to meet your goals.

If you need to raise finance then it will be important to impress the bank. The look and feel of the reports has been transformed and are now of a professional standard that will do just that.

This raft of improvements to the reports mean that businesses really can now have the right dials they need to drive their business.

If you would like to find out how Xero could help you to drive the right results in your business give Rachel a call on 0161 410 0016 to book a test drive.



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THE POWER OF THINKING DIFFERENTLY

WOOD you want this? The secrets behind the success of a furniture maker who turned his business around and **profits doubled** in just 6 months!”



Mike Smith Joinery make beautiful hand crafted pieces of furniture for your home or office for further information he can be contacted on: **Tel 0161 477 3779 Mob: 07876 362 121**
To see lots more great photos go to: www.mikesjoinery.com

Mike Smith is certainly positive about the future of his local bespoke furniture business. In just the last 6 months turnover has more than **doubled** and there's a **full order book** until the New Year – that's 4 months away. Amazing!

As Mike says life was very different not that long ago....

Less than a year ago I was considering closing the business down. The sad fact was the business wasn't making enough money. No matter how hard I worked it wasn't enough.

I was worn out and I couldn't see any light at the end of the tunnel.

The light bulb moment happened in the middle of a meeting reviewing the accounts when David from KMA said:

“The business has two main problems. Firstly, the prices are simply not high enough. Secondly you're attracting and dealing with the wrong type of customer I believe these problems CAN be fixed.”

From that moment everything changed....

Over the following six months we have worked together on making changes and improvements throughout the business. If I had to pick the most important ones then, in no particular order, then they'd be these:

- I've now got a pretty clear understanding on **who my ideal customers** are and what I should be offering that will make me attractive to them.
- I've unearthed some hidden gems because I now realise that **parts of my service are very valuable and relevant to my ideal customer**. It means that I'm less likely to undervalue and undersell myself.
- I've been **increasing my prices** on a regular basis since last October and they are now considerably higher than what they were. This goes straight through to the bottom line profit.

- My 'old' quote (which probably looked the same as everyone else did - the only difference being the price at the bottom) has been replaced **by a customer focused proposal**. I make sure it highlights to the customer of the value and benefits to them of my service.

And what's happened....

Turnover, profit, prices, sales order book and Cash flow are all up massively on where we were. The only thing that's gone down is how many hours I work - because I rarely now work weekends.

Life is so much better and I feel better. There's still stuff I need to improve BUT I feel much happier, positive and confident.

I can't believe how quickly things have been turned around. It's amazing to think what can happen when you start to look at things in your business differently.

KNOW YOUR MARKETING NUMBERS

“Half the money on advertising is wasted I just don’t know which half.”

John Wannamaker

With the growth of internet marketing - Google AdWords and Facebook Ads has meant it’s now even easier for people to waste a lot of money on marketing if they don’t do certain things.

In our experience this is one area that business owners often find quite daunting and as a result don’t even **GIVE IT A GO**. So here are some simple ideas to ensure your bank balance doesn’t dry up..

1. Know your customer

You really need to understand your customer in as much detail as possible. For example knowing what they read so you **DON’T** advertise where they’re unlikely to hang out.

2. Track all enquiries

Why not use **CALL TRACKING NUMBERS, PROMOTIONAL CODES** or specific **LANDING PAGES** so you know where all your enquiries and hence prospects are coming from.

3. Test first and analyse the results

DON’T commit to spending large sums of money without having run a test campaign first and hence having some evidence that the **“BIG”** campaign will work and pay off. It’s really important to test, review the results, improve, implement and go.

This process is critical when it comes to **Google Adwords** because its easy to spend a lot of money for little return. Most business owners focus solely on getting the **ACTUAL KEYWORDS** right and forget about **NEGATIVE KEYWORDS**.

If you have **less than 100 negative keywords** then you’re almost certainly wasting money simply because many people are clicking on your Ad aren’t actually interested in your product or service.

4. Track the results

It’s **CUSTOMERS** not **PROSPECTS** that generate cash for your business. By analysing the results you’ll see which elements of your marketing generated the right type of customer for **YOU**.



STRICTLY OR X FACTOR?

Who wins this prime time TV slot in your house? Well in my house it’s going to be Strictly and that’s because it’s my 8 year old daughter’s favourite show on TV.

I’m relaxed about this, because the deal is she only gets to watch Strictly if she’s tidy around the house especially her bedroom.

She’s **so smitten** by the show that I know that from now **to Christmas** there’ll be no whingeing or moaning on a Saturday trying to get out of doing a chore. **In her mind** there’s absolute **clarity** – what needs to be done, by when to achieve her goal of being allowed to watch Strictly.

It also means from now until Christmas I know I’ll be getting a weekly reminder about the importance of absolute **clarity** on the things that **really matter** and nothing is going to get in the way of achieving her goal.

Us as Business Owners could learn a valuable lesson and really Focus and have Crystal Clear Clarity. We often get lost in the day to day “noise” of being busy and getting “stuff” done, it is all so easy to be really Busy but not achieving where we wanted to be. It’s less than 15 weeks to 2017. Where will you be!



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KMA Accountancy

Progress House, 1st Floor, 17 Cecil Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 9NZ

