

## Hidden Barriers to Business Growth



Businesses are born from necessity or desire. Business Owners set up their companies often after being made redundant, or as an alternative to working for someone else. For all, regardless of why the business was created, there is a natural path that business owners and entrepreneurs tread. It promises to lead to growth and prosperity, but in reality, it is a path that can be long and treacherous, with no sign of reaching the desired destination. Many start the journey unsure of the destination or how realistic their chosen mode of transport (their business or venture) will be in enabling them to reach a desired destination. The journey requires business owners to work long hours, forgoing weekends and family time, battling an erratic cash flow and encountering unforeseen challenges. These sacrifices can make the business successful, but it also traps the business owner into continuing to work excessive hours. Those business owners who achieve success find it harder to get out of the Business Owners Trap, as the business has become reliant upon them.

Often business owners work more hours, for less money than when they worked for someone else. The trap also restricts the business owner's ability to extricate themselves from the business, restricting the options for retirement, or for the sale of the business. Many stumble from one crisis to another, attending to problems and issues in relation to their urgency or impact upon the business, without having the time to identify the root cause of the problem, or how to stop its recurrence. This two steps forward, one step back approach to travelling along this path inhibits growth and can keep the business owner trapped in a cycle of never ending decision making, the results of which can lead to success, but can equally lead to dead ends and wrong turns.

There is one programme that provides an alternative path for business owners, whether they are looking to develop a young company, or grow their mature business past by clearing the hurdles and roadblocks that stand in its way. The 'Managing Business Environments' programme raises the awareness of the business owner's trap and enables owners to question whether their business should be so heavily reliant upon them. The programme then supports business owner's to take a controlled approach to releasing themselves from the trap, and reducing the business' dependency upon them, helping the business to stand on its own two feet, to achieve sustainable growth and achieve the owner's goals. The programme takes business owners from walking along an uncertain path, to striding out, with a clear strategy and a defined understanding of the desired location to which their path is leading.

"The Ilixia programme, part of the 'Managing Business Environments' family of programmes, offers business owners the opportunity to plan their own business journey working with an expert coach to identify and plan the implementation of real improvements, with the goal of increasing performance." Steve Page is an expert Business Coach, heading up a team of coaches, trainers and

support staff, armed with a programme designed to release business owners from working 'in' the business, enabling them to work 'on' the business. Established in 2003, PAGE Consulting Ltd is the first to market with the innovative Ilixia programme, which will work to support business owners as government funded bodies, including Business Link reduce their business support activities. The innovative approach of the Ilixia programme is founded in the approach of reviewing and re-invigorating all aspects of the business , rather than the typical consultancy approach of an individual specialist, focusing upon only one weak area of the business.

Steve says, "Whether the businesses are selling potatoes or packaging materials, offering innovative products or essential services, the business owner's trap can keep business owners locked into the daily operational demands, without having the time or resources required to strategically develop a business or enable the investment needed to realise it's potential." The Ilixia programme matches an expert coach to a company, providing not only support and experience founded skills, but also a sounding board for those that are isolated by the business owner's trap. "Ilixia will identify and put into action opportunities to develop the business management environment, increasing the business capabilities, in a wide range of necessary business skills." How do companies benefit from engaging with the Ilixia programme? "The Managing the Business Environment family of programmes has gained interest and support from councils in the region, each keen to help young and established businesses to grow. Growth and prosperity leads to an increase in employment and the stabilisation of cash flow allows businesses to invest in new resources, enabling an increase in business to business transactions. Being a business owner can be a lonely journey, down an uncertain path. Regardless of how far a business has travelled down the path, we can support business owners to grow in a sustainable way, releasing owners from the trap, freeing them to spend their time in the way that they choose, rather than what the business demands. We provide more than just a map to navigate a way down the path, we're more like an experienced, knowledgeable 'Sat Nav', talking and coaching businesses to release their potential and reach their desired destination."