



May 2020 Volume 9, Issue 5



Facilitation Focus

PROVIDING A RANGE OF TIPS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES

**Helping You Achieve
Your Business Goals**

*A company is only as good
as its people, their ability to
deliver, and the promises
they keep.*



Conducting a Growth Audit

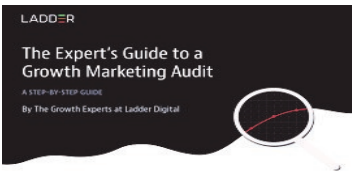
Is Work-Life Balance Really Important?

How To Attract The Right Customers

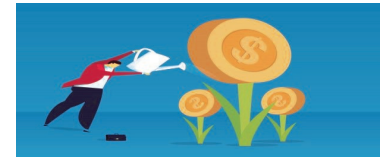
Facilitation Is A Powerful Leadership Skill

Projecting Professional Body Language

Welcome New Members From American College



Conducting a Growth Audit



Today, businesses are not only competing with other businesses across the road or in the next block, but their competitors are now scattered throughout the world.

If you're not constantly looking at ways to increase your business, then rest assured that your competitors are. And, with so many choices, there's a good chance that your present customers are always looking for better and cheaper options.

[Ladder Consultants](#) provide a comprehensive explanation in their giveaway book [“The Expert's Guide to a Growth Audit”](#) *“A Growth Audit is the first step in optimizing performance and scaling growth. It's used to identify information gaps, establish performance benchmarks, find weaknesses that need fixing or wasteful spend, and to highlight strengths worth doubling down on to scale your growth.”*

An audit, of course, is a very close and detailed examination of a process, accounts, or financial records. You may have conducted a content audit at some point in your business or consulting efforts, or maybe you've lived through the nightmare of an ATO audit.

[Webprofits](#) explain it thus: *“A growth audit, then, is just an exploration of your current online marketing strategy: the tactics, the channels, the effectiveness, the weaknesses, and the opportunities. It typically includes your search performance, your social performance, your paid ads performance, and more.”*



Image Source: [Pixabay](#)

A Growth Audit is the first step in optimizing performance and scaling growth. It's used to identify information gaps, establish performance benchmarks, find weaknesses that need rectifying or wasteful spend, and to highlight strengths.

Therefore, obviously, a S.W.O.T Analysis play a crucial role when conducting your Growth Audit

At its nucleus, a Growth Audit is a data-driven method for identifying what KPIs you actually need to hone in on. The KPIs you find from a Growth Audit will vary business to business, and even quarter to quarter.

[Sujan Patel](#), (Growth Marketer and Entrepreneur) believes that If you're not actively looking for ways to grow, you may quickly find yourself shrinking as your once loyal customers head for greener pastures. It's part of the process.

Patel states that any business plan

can be boiled down to its essence in just three simple steps:

1. Make or offer something that fills a need or desire
2. Market your solution
3. Scale and grow

So, before you head off on your growth audit odyssey, you need to first determine whether your product or service is actually ready for growth in the first place.

To answer that, you need to take a close look at your [product-market fit](#).

“Product/market fit means being in a good market with a product that can satisfy that market.” [Marc Andreessen](#), co-founder of Netscape & VC firm Andreessen Horowitz.

Ideally, your client has had previous [Health Checks](#), and you can simply update this. However, if there is no previous Health Check in the business, then you need to carry out a comprehensive Check to give you the big picture.

This all begins with an assessment by you, in your capacity as the Facilitator who is independent of the business. It involves a comprehensive diagnostic on the business and the outcome will define the strength of the business while pointing out ways of improving the business.

Business today is fiercely competitive. Competition is everywhere. Customers are more discerning than ever before. The answer is:- It all begins with an audit.

If you're not growing, you're dying. So grow. ☒



Is Work-Life Balance Really Important?



Is work-life balance completely overrated? If you're working long hours doing what you love, what does it matter if the scales are out of balance?

For lots of entrepreneurs who have turned their passion into a business, there's no need to keep work and life in separate boxes. When your passion and your work are in synch, spending your days (and nights) on the job is just how you enjoy spending time.

For devoted business owners who are a tad fed-up with people suggesting they need to get a life, the latest data from the [Household, Income and Labour Dynamics](#) longitudinal survey could provide some valuable ammunition.

It found work actually improves our general health. Plus, it concluded there is "no evidence that long hours of work (51 or more hours a week of paid work and 81 or more hours of total work) are detrimental to health."

However, a recent study, published in the [American Journal of Epidemiology](#), shows that a combination of stress, raised blood pressure and unhealthy diets stemming from long working hours may be the cause of thousands of workers' serious health problems.

The latest findings discovered by scientists at the [Finnish Institute of Occupational Health](#) support results from a 2011 British survey that revealed that doing more than 11 hours of work a day raised heart disease risks by 67 percent.

Lead researcher [Dr. Marianna Virtanen](#) and her team gathered data from 12 different studies going back to 1958, when researchers first suggested that working long hours could be linked to poor heart health.

In total, the studies involved more

than 22,000 business owners and employees, from Britain, the USA, Japan, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands.

"There are several potential mechanisms that may underlie the association between long working hours and heart disease," study authors wrote. "One is prolonged exposure to psychological stress."

Researchers said that other factors could be increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol, poor eating habits and lack of physical activity due to limited leisure time.

But, according to the [ABC](#), in a report on the 21st August 2015, working 55 hours or more can significantly increase your risk of having a stroke, according to a new study.

The study, published in [The Lancet](#), analysed data from 25 studies that tracked the health of over 600,000 men and women from Europe, the US and Australia for up to eight and a half years.

"Pooling of all available studies on this topic allowed us to investigate the association between working hours and cardiovascular disease risk with greater precision than has previously been possible," says the study's lead author Professor Mika Kivimäki of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, [University College London](#).

The data showed that people working 55 hours a week had a 33 per cent greater risk of having a stroke than people who worked a standard 35 - 40 hour week.

And, the more hours people worked beyond standard hours, the higher their chance of having a stroke - even after accounting for other factors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, physical activity, blood pressure and cholesterol.

Working beyond 55 hours a week was also linked to a modest 13 per cent increased risk of developing coronary heart disease.

"Our findings suggest that more attention should be paid to the management of vascular risk factors in individuals who work long hours," say the researchers.

The researchers say a number of factors such as stress, physical inactivity, and high alcohol consumption may contribute to the higher risk of stroke seen in people who work longer hours.

Professor Dino Pisaniello of the University of Adelaide says physical inactivity for extended periods is an underlying risk factor for both stroke and coronary heart disease.

"Long working hours is a proxy for other risk factors, which may be more common in workers of low socio-economic status," says Pisaniello.

"The [study] should provide a stimulus for workplaces and regulators to re-examine long working hours and in particular, long periods of physical inactivity for men in lower paid jobs."

Tony LaMontagne, a professor of work, health and wellbeing at Deakin University says the study reinforces a growing body of research that has linked long working hours to a variety of adverse health outcomes, as well as with work-family conflict.

Recent research by LaMontagne's group found that working over 49 hours was associated with lower mental health, especially for women working in jobs at higher occupational skill levels.



How to Attract The Right Customers As Your Business Grows

Finding new customers is expensive and time consuming, but necessary if you want your business to grow. Use these strategies to make sure you're going after the right ones.

Even if you have a solid business plan and a proven system to attract customers, there are always opportunities to grow and improve. When you first started your own business, you were probably just happy to make a sale.

Eventually though, it behooves you to work with the right customers; the ones who keep you motivated and excited to keep putting out your best work. The longevity of your success in your business actually depends on this. The “right” client is someone who fits into your overall goals, sees the value of your work, and doesn't wear you down until the work is no longer worth your time or effort.

You can attract more of the right clients with these essential tips:

1. Who is your ideal customer? Attracting the right clients first begins by determining who they are and identifying their profile. Get as specific as possible including age, gender, job, income, and their needs and preferences. Think about what their lifestyle might be like and what types of services or products they would use. This will help you keep your marketing consistent, your correspondences enticing, and your advertisements laser-focused.

2. Know who you're talking to. Be clear on who you're addressing and how you can help them. Set up Google Alerts to receive information on your clients' businesses and your industry in real time to keep a

competitive edge and ensure you're always up-to-date on their needs. Tailor your communications with them accordingly.

3. Ask for referrals. Referrals and endorsements from high-quality clientele are the best way to attract new, like-minded clients/customers. You can also encourage them to write positive reviews and post recommendations on social media sites. A happy customer's recommendation is like a gift that keeps on giving. It's likely that their friends are also top-tier folks that fall into the same demographic you're looking for. Build a good rapport with your clients and prepare for an avalanche of ideal customers to follow.

4. Network with your ideal clients. Determine where your perfect customers hang out; think about what type of neighborhood shops they frequent or the kind of businesses they work for. Market your business as something that would fit in that same lifestyle aesthetic or category. Join in events relevant to your industry and your clients for an opportunity to network such as charity events, conferences, or trade shows just to name a few. See and be seen where they are.

5. Share your expertise. Write for industry trade journals, host a workshop, or speak at industry events, panel discussions, or in online forums to help promote your business and generate new interest in your services. Your results speak volumes and your ideal client will probably be focused on the bottom-line. People are always willing to pay more for an expert or specialist so make sure that the content or information you're contributing surpasses your clients' experience and expectations.

6. Target marketing. Reach out to your ideal customers and develop

relationships with them through targeted networking. The more connected you are, the easier it is to offer solutions that meet their needs. Connect with them in strategic ways over social media, in forums, and at live events. Share relevant articles, case studies, and other info on your social media pages. Connect with as many networks and colleagues as possible through LinkedIn; your connections will bring up more acquaintances in related fields and similar demographics.

Where you find your customers will depend on the nature of your business. Think like your ideal client and you'll be able to expand your demographic around the globe, taking your business to the next level with ease. Superior clients not only benefit your profits, but will keep you interested and driven to improve and expand your business in an effortless and organic way.

7. Ad campaigns. You don't have to be a marketing expert to use Facebook ads or Google Adwords. These are great ways to advertise your company directly to your target market without breaking the bank on advertising costs. Online ads allow you to address your ideal audience and schedule ads based on the times they're engaging on social media sites. You can also track the attention your ads are receiving so you can make adjustments to them as necessary.

Lauren Gall, Co-Founder of VaVa Virtual Assistants, offers administrative and marketing services for busy entrepreneurs. VaVa provides an expert team for your back office support and handle tasks such as calendar management, customer service, social media, drip campaigns, and advertising. ☒

Facilitation is a Powerful Leadership Skill

Facilitation can be a powerful way to accelerate learning and boost leadership skills for any entrepreneur, business owner or leader.

The potential benefits of having a facilitator to work with you are manifold. Facilitators, Coaches, Mentors, all may help you focus and gain clarity on issues. A facilitator may also provide candid feedback that others may not.



[Beatrice Briggs](#) is a Certified Professional Facilitator, and a director of the [International Institute for Facilitation and Change](#)

states: *“Today’s leaders do not have followers, they have teams. These teams need effective leadership, but not of the old, top-down kind. They need leaders who can bring a team together to clarify goals, set priorities, assess progress, seek solutions for problems, assign tasks and be accountable to one another.”*

[Jeffrey Cufaude](#) believes that the true art of facilitative leadership is being able to maximize others’ contributions. He states: *“Leadership traditionally has been thought of as “doing the right thing” while management has been defined as “doing things right.”*

Effective facilitation involves

using processes and tools to maximize the collective intelligence of individuals in a group to determine the right course of action and to then build a template for acting on the choices they make.

Facilitation, while long associated with individuals leading workshops, planning meetings, or other group processes, actually encompasses a broad mix of consulting and coaching skills that are too critical to be relegated to the domain of a select few.

[New Horizons](#) advocates that there are 7 skills that every great leader should have:

1. Emotional Intelligence
2. Conflict Resolution
3. Critical thinking
4. Ability to negotiate
5. Coaching/Mentoring abilities
6. Effective Facilitation
7. Positive Assertiveness

The skilled facilitator should also possess the following Interpersonal Skills:

- Self Confidence
- Self Awareness
- Empathy
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Leadership Skills

Other subsidiary, but necessary Skills are:

- Time Management
- Lateral Thinking
- Ability to change attitude
- Self-realization

The [Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators](#)

(AIBEF) believes that there are two vital skills that are necessary for all Facilitators, Namely:-

1. Empathy
2. Listening Skills



[M.P. Ganesh](#), who is a faculty member at [IIT Madras](#) says that organizations are now filled with individuals with many diverse backgrounds and values, and culture.

It is very important for an individual to be patient, show empathy, be a good listener and be sensitive to others’ needs.

Listening skills play a crucial role in the entire mentoring sessions.

Since the mentees hail from different backgrounds, the facilitator has to listen carefully to understand the mentees’ thoughts and ideas.

Conversely, sometimes the mentee may not understand what the facilitator is saying.

Many of you are already facilitators. If you’re a project manager, business analyst, change lead, or process improvement specialist, you are a facilitator of change and action.

Practicing the 7 skills (as described by [New Horizons](#) detailed earlier) of a facilitative leader can move you from being “merely” a facilitator to being a respected facilitative leader.



The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (AIBEF) was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills.

In their report, entitled *Enterprising Nation*, the taskforce recommended that: “.... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, facilitators and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.”

It's a fact that, at the moment, the business advice industry in Australia is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, facilitator, trainer or consultant.

Check out Google for instance; there must be a dozen (or more) sites on “*How To Start Your Own Business Consulting Venture*”.

The AIBEF is the Peak Body for Business Facilitators, Coaches and Trainers, and we, the AIBEF Committee, hope to continue the association's great work to further promote the professionalism and quality of our members, and to endeavour to act as a respected voice and advocate for the wider community.

The AIBEF represents a profession that is proud of its independence and confident of the service it provides, committed to continual improvement in the skills and knowledge of our members and Business and Enterprise Facilitators in general, who ably assist in the professional guidance and support of business, enterprise and community development.

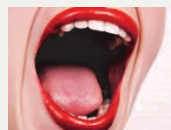
Welcome to our Newsletter

Facilitation Focus is an opportunity for Business Facilitators, Coaches, Facilitators, Trainers and Consultants to ask questions, offer answers, and become part of a group where we can all join in peer-to-peer discussions and conversations about challenges, experiences and outcomes. ***It is also worth noting that 'Focus' can be included in your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)***

Facilitation Focus is a publication for a rapidly changing world.

Almost daily, SME's are facing constant changes, and it is vital that the Business and Enterprise Facilitator is current with their expert advice and guidance.

Facilitation Focus has as its main aim to access to a professional network of peers through the AIBEF, and by gaining more insight into business and industry best practices, as well as increasing the focus on the important aspects of their own business, an AIBEF Focus member can accomplish amazing results.



Something To Say?

Letters and Article contributions from members and readers are most welcome

Please send your comments to info@aibef.org.au



The AIBEF welcomes our two latest members from American College (RTO) in Brisbane.



Chirath receives his AIBEF Membership Certificate from AIBEF President Dennis Chiron

Chirath Rodrigo is a highly respected, skilled trainer who graduated from Griffith Uni in 2009. Further studies after his graduation have earned him both the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Leadership and Management.



Maria Zia is well-regarded in the industry and holds both a Masters in International Marketing and a Masters in Business and IT, as well as a BBIT in Information Technology.

Both Chirath and Maria are trainers and assessors at American College and teach a range of courses in Business and Management.

