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Facilitation Focus

PROVIDING A RANGE OF TIPS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES
FOR YOU TO USE OR PASS ON TO YOUR CLIENTS

Helping you achieve your business goals in 2021

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



WHAT WOULD
YOU ATTEMPT
TO DO IF YOU
KNEW YOU
COULD NOT
FAIL?

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Business Plans Are a Waste of Time !!

I know it's a bit controversial for someone like me who works as a Consultant to SME businesses to make this statement, but for most business owners it's the absolute truth.

Having worked as a business improvement and implementation specialist to businesses in virtually all industries for over two decades, the absolute truth of the matter is that most business owners spend a lot of time and effort developing business plans which then sit on a shelf and gather dust.

If this is the case they have simply wasted their time and should have carried on and just hoped they had the right game plan. It will be the dearest coffee table book they've ever bought, and they had to write it themselves.



[Ricardo Semmler](#), the author of *Maverick* and *The Seven Day Weekend* said 'The best thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise, and isn't preceded by a period of worry and depression.' It's actually one of my favourite sayings.

Over the years I've seen hundreds

of Business Plans, most of which have been written to convince the bank that the business will make enough money to pay back the loan they gave them to get it started, or for that next major expansion.

They are unrealistic expressions of hope that highlight the strengths of the owners and their team, as well as the opportunities of the venture, whilst virtually ignoring the weaknesses and threats in the business and market in which they operate.

What people fail to realise is that banks in Australia have been reading business plans for about 150 years, and chances are they have seen better fables than you're trying to spin over the years.

They will spot an unrealistic business plan in an instant, because they've seen lots of them. They'll probably still give you the money but they'll make sure they have security over your house before they do.

You probably sense I'm a bit jaded by the whole business planning concept, but that's just not true.

A balanced Business Plan that is well implemented and regularly reviewed is probably the most valuable bit of intellectual property in your business, but the truth of the matter is that to find one that is realistic, implemented and reviewed is incredibly rare.

In small and even medium sized business there is absolutely no point in an 80 page document that nobody is going to read.

You need a short punchy document that has a few key features such as a comprehensive Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis from



Score.org

which the strategies have been developed that will lead to the agreed objectives and ultimate goal of the organisation that also need to be documented within the Plan.

It should also be accompanied by robust budgets for profit, cash flow and capital expenditure requirements. In my experience these Plans are rarely more than 15 to 20 pages in length.

The most important step once you have completed your shiny new Business Plan is to develop your Implementation Plan. This is the step that most business owners fail to complete and yet it is almost as important as developing the plan in the first place.

The Implementation Plan breaks down the strategies contained in the business plan, prioritises them, and then breaks them down into individual tasks, allocating them to a person, and timelines when they must be completed.

In effect it turns each strategy into a Project Plan which is solely focussed on achieving the objective to which it is linked.

If you just have a Business Plan without an Implementation Plan, I would suggest you're just wasting your time. ☒



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GOOD SOLID RESEARCH MAKES FOR A BETTER BUSINESS

Nothing beats good customer feedback. Recently I had my first experience with a product called Survey Monkey. It is a specialist online software that you can download and trial for free. I am sure there are many others but, this seems to be the one that most of the people I deal with have used.

At some stage there is a fee but when it kicks in only you can find that out by going and, having a look at the website.

They give you a lot of tips as to how design surveys and, whilst I did look at their tips, I found the whole experience fairly easy. I have had a bit of experience with market research and, like to get a handle on what the market might be saying.

Now you have access to a simple tool that if you have the email addresses of some of your clients you can get their opinion. Their privacy is assured. So what happened to me?

I had a subscription and that allowed me the scope to ask more questions. In the end I asked 24. I was told it was too many but, I persevered and sent it anyway. It was just a joy to see the responses come rolling back.

I asked questions that were not about me selling anything. I just simply wanted to know what small business owners were doing. Some examples of the answers gave me some great insights. Many have not had a holiday in over 5 years.



Some had to have second jobs to make ends meet or have their partner have another job to pay the general expenses. Many were over 50 and there were more men in business than women.

I point out it is not a tool that I can use to make too many assumptions as there was no scientific approach to the sample. Nonetheless it gave me a good handle on the market and what it was experiencing.

You too can do these simple surveys quickly and ask your customers and, those whose business you want, what it is they are looking for.

It could be, that you want to ask if they are getting good service from you or not. Bad service leads to loss of custom. I also just filled in one for the NBN as well.

Very cleverly done (mobile phone) survey. I guess they can do that sort of thing they seem to have an unlimited supply of money!

It is really incumbent on you to make sure that you are doing business to meet the requirements of this marketplace we are all operating in.

Survey Monkey (perhaps other software) are great tools to help business owners understand their markets and their customers' needs and wants. "If you can measure it you can manage it" measure your customer satisfaction by any number of parameters and by any means. (you do not have to do what I did and go online) you can just ask the question when they come in.

Asking where do you find us? What brought you here? Even a secret shopper can be of great help to you getting a better understanding of your customers and your market. I think we are in for a tough time and those who really hang on to customers and do the best they can with good customer service and value adding will probably fare better than most.

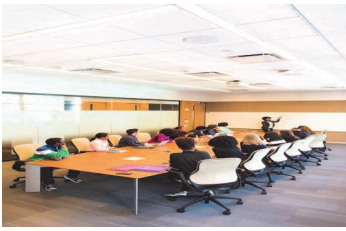
There are many other factors in the running of a business and everyone has an idea on how it should be done.

Me? I keep it simple I just look after the customer the rest seems to follow.

Funny that.

**Peter Nicol is an Associate Member of the AIBEF and runs his own marketing firm [Wisdom Marketing & Management Services](http://www.wisdommarketing.com.au). Peter is also the inventor of ["The Prong"](#) which he exports world-wide.*





What Makes An Exceptional Facilitator?

Do You Have What It Takes?



A few months ago, I wrote an article for “Focus” entitled “*Mentoring, Coaching, Facilitation – is there a difference*”, which generated some interesting feedback from our readers.

What makes for an excellent facilitator? What personal qualities do top facilitators possess that separate them from the good facilitator? Is it more the training or the inner qualities? Is it more the facilitating technique or the artistry? Is it more facilitating knowledge or its application? Is it more natural talent for helping people or cultivated abilities?

Whilst there probably is no one single attribute that all excellent facilitators possess, exceptional facilitators do have one thing in common: They all connect with their clients, they know how to make changes with them and they know how to get results. Bottom line, they get the work done.

This current article, “*What Makes an Exceptional Facilitator*”, attempts to identify a number of the common traits and skills that are prevalent in many practitioners.

Whether you see yourself as a Business and/or Enterprise Coach, Mentor, Advisor, Trainer, Consultant or Facilitator, (*and for the purpose of this article, we will use the title “Facilitator” for all of the above*) knowing how you can be a better facilitator is the key.

Being a good facilitator is an acquired talent and skill; being an Exceptional Facilitator is more than that, it’s an art form, and in

reality it’s a talent in which very few people excel.

To be an effective facilitator, not only do you need to learn how to communicate well and help others to get results, you need to guide, motivate and inspire others to reach their full potential.

According to [Karen Williams](#), a great facilitator is likely to have the following talents or qualities:

- **A sound understanding of facilitating philosophies:**

There is no foolproof, perfect Facilitator’s model for any of us to follow religiously to be an exceptional Facilitator, but having an understanding of the facilitating frameworks and transformational questions is a good place to start. When you have a sound understanding of the philosophies of facilitating, you’ll recognise the principles that exist in an effective facilitating conversation.

- **The ability to communicate well**

We can all say we communicate well, although as a facilitator, less is more. A great facilitator listens more than he or she speaks, reflects the client’s language back to them (NLP), recognises the importance of silence, and builds rapport with ease. An exceptional facilitator is non-directive, non-judgemental, and observant of what is and is not said by their clients. The skills of being able to empathise and put yourself in your client’s shoes are also very important.

- **Be an effective motivator**

Being positive, proactive and an effective motivator are important parts of being a great facilitator, as you’ll need to encourage your clients

to get great results. If they fail to deliver their agreed actions or don’t do something that is important to them, you may need to reflect this back to them. To be a great facilitator, you need to be able to inspire, support, challenge, and lead by example, and also encourage your clients to celebrate their successes.

- **Be committed towards results**

You don’t need to know the ‘*life and times*’ of your clients intimately to help them to get the outcomes they desire. But you do need to be committed towards helping them to achieve results.

You can then both measure the outcomes and how they impact on the bottom line, whether this is financial or a softer measure.

- **The ability to take your skills into any situation**

Being an exceptional facilitator is important in a formal one-to-one setting, but it is equally important to be able to play the same role with a small group as well as a larger group, or even an entire community. Taking these skills into other situations will cultivate and build relationships.

[Bill Cole](#) believes: “*Whether you take a facilitating approach into a training environment, use your talents to facilitate a meeting, guide a client in establishing a new enterprise, assist them with developing business plans, feasibility studies, or financial forecasts, or help a group establish a co-operative, facilitating is a way of life, a technique that gets great results.*”

The Creative Collective

Yvette Adams - CEO/Founder

Specialty Areas: Business Strategy, Business Facilitation, Marketing Strategy, Websites, PR, Event Management, Social Media, Webinars, Business Awards & Tender Submissions

Yvette was born on the fortunate cusp of Generation X & Y into a techie family which at any one time had several computers littered about the house.

She started her first business at the age of 17 – a newspaper – which was bought out by an American entrepreneur after its first issue. She created her second business and first e-commerce site in 2002 – an online tee-shirt business.

Within one month of launching she received a Government Grant and won a website award. In 2006 she sold the global business and concentrated on launching The Creative Collective.

An international freelance writer of many years and a self-published author (see www.morethanmeets.co), she has been the online content editor of a massive player in the UK magazine market (tntmagazine.com), and has consulted numerous businesses in New Zealand, the UK and Australia on their online strategies and built many websites.

She started The Creative Collective in 2007 after the birth of her second child from the study nook of her home, and it has since grown to have six staff based from



the company's commercial offices in Maroochydore, Queensland, 2 franchisees and over 30 contractors around the world.

She has won numerous business awards including the Commonwealth Bank Business Owner of the Year Award at the Telstra Business Womens Awards Queensland 2010 against a field of 4200, the Entrepreneurial Award at the Women in Technology Awards in 2012, and being recognized as a finalist in the Asian Entrepreneur category of the Stevie Awards for Women in Business.

She now promotes this awards program, which also includes the International Business Awards, the Sales & Customer Service Awards and the American Business Awards in the Australia and New Zealand regions.

She is an experienced and inspiring speaker who shares her message with passion and enthusiasm and is available for public speaking engagements.

She is involved in a number of industry reference groups and a member of several professional associations.

She is regularly called on by the media as a spokesperson and for commentary and writes regular columns for the APN group, Marketing Magazine and The



Creative Collective blog.

- See more at: <http://www.thecreativecollective.com.au/meet-yvette#sthash.T4vHfHxg.dpuf>

The Creative Collective is an award-winning and full-service creative / marketing agency based on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland, with franchisees in Newcastle, NSW and the Gold Coast.

Founded in 2007 Yvette said that since the beginning we have prided ourselves on keeping up with the ever changing landscape of marketing and communications.

Increasingly, our focus is drawn to online marketing strategies and online marketing activities as it consistently seems to produce the best results for our clients.

We provide website design and development, graphic design and print, PR and marketing, search engine optimisation, pay per click and social media, livestream & webinar services.

We also offer an extensive array of training solutions including webinars, BYO Laptop Trainings, programs and more. For a full list of our current training offerings see our events page.

- See more at: <http://www.thecreativecollective.com.au/#sthash.65oEMrdA.dpuf>





How to Attract The Right Customers As Your Business Grows



Lauren Gall

Finding new customers is expensive and time consuming, but necessary if you want your business to grow. Use these nine 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.

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.

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.

**Lauren Gall is a passionate educator and business facilitator professional, and holds a Bachelor of Business Management from USC. 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. *



REQUEST A FREE CONSULTATION WITH A SMALL BUSINESS EXPERT

This is Your Opportunity to Speak to a Professional, Qualified Business Facilitator
Simply click anyway on this flyer and complete the Diagnostic Form
And we will connect you with an Industry Expert **ALL AT NO COST**

Welcome to the Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitation Inc. (AIBEF). The AIBEF is the Peak Body for Business and Enterprise Facilitation and Facilitators with members drawn from many diverse industries within Australia and New Zealand.

The 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, coaches, mentors and advisors, so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.

This was a bold attempt by the Taskforce to do away with those practitioners who called themselves business coaches and had little or no qualifications or experience.

To establish the high standard of skills required for enterprise facilitation, Members of the AIBEF are required to undertake a training course in small business counselling and related business skills, and complete over two hundred hours of structured counselling sessions.

A comprehensive accreditation process is in place to ensure that business owners/managers are being provided with a consistent and easy method of identifying suitably skilled trainers, educators, counsellors, coaches, mentors, advisors, and facilitators.

Look for the AIBEF Accreditation with your Facilitator, and you know that you have a fully-accredited, experienced Professional who is qualified, and recognized as an expert in their industry.

Request a Free Consultation

Simply click [HERE](#) and complete the Diagnostic Form, and we will connect you with an AIBEF Business Facilitator who is ideally suited to provide you with the best advice in your area of industry.

Or, for further information contact Dennis Chiron on the mobile or email detailed below.



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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.



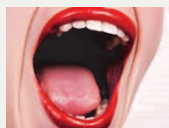
Welcome to our Newsletter

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

WHO ARE BUSINESS OR ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS?

Virtually any professional, qualified person or organisation involved in assisting entrepreneurs, organisations, or communities to improve their Skills; Knowledge; Business; Staff; and/or Life.

The role of a Business and Enterprise Facilitator is to promote local economic growth by providing support to local entrepreneurs, groups or entire communities wishing to start or expand a small business enterprise or to assist to develop a concept where the community will benefit

The concept of Business and Enterprise Facilitation is a model of development that supports the creation of wealth from within a community by nurturing the resourcefulness of its people.

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators is an international not-for-profit institution that works with entrepreneurs, small groups and / or communities to establish sustainable, grassroots enterprise projects.

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