

Who's in the driving seat?

Whilst many UK SME business owners would like to think of their business as a well oiled machine many are turning to Icon Business Solutions (IBS) advisors for some strategic fine tuning.

Common causes of SME business breakdown identified by IBS advisors include falling revenues and lack of the necessary systems required for sustainable growth.

Ever thought of getting some professional help for your business? Then you're not alone. Most business owners in the sector are confident within their own field of expertise but feel that a lack of business systems, accurate accounting and marketing expertise is holding them back. And they are probably right.

It's sometimes taken for granted that the requisite skills and knowledge, will somehow magically appear as a business grows. But these need to be acquired in the same way as anything else. This is why many small and medium-sized businesses find the idea of building a long term relationship with an IBS advisor an attractive one.

Often, the problem is that once a consultant has delivered up a plan, they disappear, leaving the client to implement the recommendations on their own. This is usually difficult and sometimes impossible. Research indicates that business owners work upwards of 60 hour weeks on average and struggle to come to grips with the three essential business areas of time, team and money. With this kind of pressure, it's no surprise that they don't just want the answers to their problems, they want the right kind of help in implementing and running solutions. It is this situation that Icon Business Solutions, part of the ICON Global Consulting Group aims to address with a new, hands-on style of advising.

In essence its offering is a simple idea – helping businesses to help themselves

by improving both business planning and skills through hands on experience.

The flagship product SuccessModel™ Planning, is designed to enable SME owners to look at their business from a new perspective and to adopt strategies and concepts that traditional consulting methods can't deliver. This starts off by involving the client in the analysis process, right from the beginning.

Heatley Gilmore, Managing Director of Icon Business Solutions explains, "Many people who run their own businesses are technically skilled at what they are producing, but don't have all the ancillary business skills. They can work up to 80 hours a week, struggling to manage staff, deal with their accounts and satisfy customers' demands. Nobody knows their business as well as they do. It's our job to enable business owners and staff to make their own decisions by developing their skills & knowledge. IBS advisors don't disappear after delivering a plan, but work through the implementation of the plan with the business owner, giving them first hand experience on how to implement systems and changes into their business."

Another key member of the Icon Business Solutions team is Nic Clark, creator of SuccessModel™ Planning. He sums up, 'My goal was to devise a simple, yet powerful system, to let the business owner reinvigorate their company and reach its maximum potential.'

Another innovative feature of IBS consultancy is a recognition that there's more to the bottom line than just money. Sometimes the objective for a client is simply better organisation or productivity to increase quality time away from work. Says Gilmore: "There can be personal

benefits too for business owners, like more free time. How many of us miss seeing our kids growing up, sacrifice holidays or neglect leisure activities? If we learn to work more efficiently, we can afford to kick back sometimes and enjoy the fruits of our labours – like a day on the golf course or a family holiday."

Linda Stone is a Director of Advertising Agency, Einstein Da Vinci & Company. She says: "Before I was working 60 to 80 hours a week. Now, 12 months later, I have reduced that to 40 to 50 hours and my bottom line is up 154%... I've got a life back... I think a lot of business owners appreciate that; spending time doing what you like!"

Roz Deagon is a Director of Printers, Advanced Printing. He adds: "It (SuccessModel™ Planning) made us have a good look at our business and where we were going. We hadn't explored a lot of the software that we had, or thought a lot about direction. It made us focus on our business strengths, where we wanted to go and where we needed to be. We then formulated new strategies with debt collecting – that helped enormously."

If you want to learn more about the revolutionary strategies that can reduce the amount of hours you spend in your business and dramatically improve your life, phone 020 8334 8043 or email infouk@iconbusinessolutions.com today, for a FREE consultation with an IBS Business Advisor, and as a special offer (when you mention this advertisement) you will receive a FREE copy of Nic Clark's business building workbook.