

YOUR PERENNIAL BUSINESS ASSESSMENT



DEVELOPING AN OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

Many professionals experience a “feast-famine” of clients and income. Like a gardener relying on annuals rather than perennials, their crops need constant re-cultivation. This takes lots of time and energy.

Our goal is to design a Perennial Business, which is self-sustaining with delighted clients, where the professional enjoys their business lives and the income continues to grow. What difference would that make to you?

This assessment will take c. 20-30 minutes to complete. Why not grab yourself a cup of coffee, or discuss it with someone else and complete it together? The purpose is not to expose weaknesses, but to open up new possibilities for an outstanding business.

Please tick the box that most closely represents where you or your business is now. Then give yourself points accordingly. No marks for wishful thinking: weeds really thrive in the shadows of delusion! Feel free to replace “we” with “I” if you are working independently.

There are some questions relating to staff / team. Even if you don't have a team employed, please answer the questions anyway as you may have a virtual or an outsourced team of people that help you with your business.

If it is not your business but are employed by the business; answer the questions as if it were your business, and how you conduct your role. It will be your fast-track up the career ladder.

FIRST DIMENSION: OUTSTANDING CLIENT FOCUS

Positioning services at the hub of the client world

1. A complete stranger would be able to identify our ideal clients ...
 - Within a two-minute conversation i.e. we work with clear-cut niches that are easy to identify (3 points)
 - After hearing a presentation, and understanding what we do in a bit more detail (2 points)
 - When they knew somebody really well and understood their requirements in some depth (1 point)
 - We don't work with niches – anybody could be a client (0 points)

2. We are regularly found at the hub of our ideal client world: speaking, hosting events, e-forums, writing, exhibiting:
 - Monthly or more frequently (3 points)
 - At regular intervals during the year (2 points)
 - Occasionally, when the opportunity presents itself – or mainly within our own profession / industry (1 point)
 - We rely exclusively on client referrals, networking, or direct marketing (0 points)

3. People readily understand what we do because ...

- We can articulate our services in seven seconds: who we work for and the benefits they get (3 points)
- We speak their language, and we know exactly what our ideal clients want (2 points)
- We have an interesting philosophy and methodology (1 point)
- Everyone needs what we do (0 points)

Accelerating with the power of trust

4. Potential clients can easily assess our credibility ...

- Via our published materials which are frequently requested because of their usefulness (3 points)
- By means of published case-studies and testimonials that are freely available (2 points)
- By checking with others with whom we have worked – which they can do easily (1 point)
- By means of a presentation that we can give them if they ask (0 points)

5. Apart from the work, I enjoy excellent relationships with my clients;

- I would choose to spend time with them even if all the work was done (3 points)
- They often use me as a sounding board on other issues (2 points)
- If I had the time, I would spend more time with my clients (1 point)
- Our relationships are strictly professional (0 points)

6. In order to prove that we can be counted on, that we are reliable ...

- We have a system for making and keeping promises (3 points)
- When I make a decision, I stick to it (2 points)
- Once I make an appointment, I keep it (1 point)
- I never hide or exaggerate – neither with clients or colleagues (0 points)

Pricing according to value – and securing the business

7. Before any pricing conversation happens

- We have the confidence and skill to coach a client on value-setting questions early on (3 points)
- We try to do this but clients deflect our enquiries (2 points)
- I have no idea what this is about (1 point)
- It is difficult / impossible to do this in my profession (0 points)

8. When I am asked “how much does it cost?”

- I offer options and assist clients to choose what is best for them based on the value they seek (3 points)
- I present a recommendation and seek to resolve objections there-and-then (2 points)
- I fumble a bit and feel a bit awkward at this stage of the conversation (1 point)
- I offer to go away and write a proposal based on the time and the costs (0 points)

9. When a client starts to negotiate ...

- I welcome this buying signal, establish any other issues, and move confidently to agreement (3 points)
- Our quotations are based on the value to the client, not estimates of time (2 points)
- I am happy to walk away if I don't get what I want (1 point)
- I am fully prepared with facts, figures and hourly estimates to justify my quotation (0 points)

Developing a top reputation in a niche

10. As we reach the pinnacle of our professional field, the quality of clients and fees curve sharply upwards. Therefore our reputation could be described as:

- Mastery – internationally known for one niche or specialism – setting the pace (3 points)
- Professional – time for both development and fee-earning – regional or national reputation (2 points)
- Amateur – early stage of growth, experimenting to find the right clients, not well known yet (1 point)
- Survival – still unknown - getting through the next six months and then looking at the future (0 points)

11. The financial status mirrors our professional standing:

- Mastery – high fees coming from several countries – knowledge products are selling (3 points)
- Professional - profitable practice even at half-capacity – knowledge products are in development (2 points)
- Amateur – practice surviving partially from reserves or with external support (1 point)
- Hobbyist – enjoying it and bringing in some nice pocket-money, but dependent on reserves or financial support. (0 points)

12. The world of knowledge never stands still: so ...

- We have an active programme of research so that we stay ahead of our clients (3 points)
- We constantly pursue professional development that is more than required by CPD (Continuous Professional Development) (2 points)
- We read widely and stay in touch with developments in our field (1 point)
- We rely on the experience that comes from doing the job (0 points)

SECOND DIMENSION: QUALITY BUSINESS

Getting more done in less time

13. The way in which I avoid overwhelm is:

- I have regular time set aside in my diary for daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly planning (3 points)
- Rather than disappoint a client, I say No up-front - and I have done this within the last month (2 points)
- I have occasional buffer time set aside to catch up (1 point)
- I work hard to stop things piling up (0 points)

14. In order to stay organised ...

- I choose my favourite clients and have systems in place to delegate everything else (3 points)
- We have separated 'bill' time from 'build' time in a way that works for us (2 points)
- Finances are controlled via a monthly reporting v. budget or forecast (1 point)
- I have meticulous systems for filing and organising things (0 points)

15. The system of monitoring and evaluation is:

- There is a key indicator with each milestone of the client journey, measured monthly (3 points)
- We have organised client-review and feedback sessions (2 points)
- We check that we meet our target revenue billing each month (1 point)
- We monitor ad-hoc, making the best use of time between client appointments (0 points)

Refining the client journey so that it is easy and attractive

16. Knowing that most clients don't just sign up instantly with professionals without first building some trust ...

- We have designed a client journey (with materials) so that clients can take one step at a time (3 points)
- We have some excellent materials that clients find really impressive (2 points)
- We constantly seek to improve and innovate (1 point)
- We accept that some clients will choose us, others won't (0 points)

17. We are different from other professionals ...

- Because our clients tell us that we are no.1 - and tell everyone else about what we do (3 points)
- Because we engage in practice-development programmes, aspiring to be the best in our field (2 points)
- Because we give good value for money (1 point)
- Because of our values of quality and service (0 points)

18. In order to delight the clients we already have, we aim to exceed their expectations ...

- We have a system in place to do this, plus research to stay ahead of the clients (3 points)
- We constantly look out for ways in which we can benefit their lives / businesses (2 points)
- The opportunities to do this are limited (1 point)
- It takes all our effort to meet their current expectations (0 points)

Delegating the prospecting to clients and alliances

19. Apart from client referrals, the best source of new clients is

- Strategic partnerships with other professionals serving our niche market (3 points)
- Alliances with conference organisers, editors, publishers etc. active in the trade associations of clients (2 points)
- Requests for materials and assessments that others have passed on (1 point)
- Networking or direct marketing (0 points)

20. When I am looking for referrals from clients and alliance partners, my aim is

- To make contact, ask permission to send them some useful materials and include them in regular communication (3 points)
- To call them up and have a conversation by phone (2 points)
- To get a meeting with them, or do a presentation, or arrange lunch (1 point)
- To sign them up as clients (0 points)

Creating a system for staying in touch

21. As the garden grows, it will not be possible to tend to every plant individually to the extent that we might like. So we are faced with a dilemma: either to restrict the size of our landscape or create a system to nurture relationships.

- We have an interesting means of contacting everyone we know on a regular basis (3 points)
- We send out regular updates about our business and our clients (2 points)
- We run occasional events where we invite selected clients and prospects (1 point)
- We rely on staying in touch on a personal one-to-one basis (0 points)

22. To be effective, we must use a system that is useful rather than promotional:

- People ask to be included, and we get regular business enquires from this reservoir (3 points)
- Our strategic alliance partners help to get new subscribers (2 points)
- We are adding over 20 ideal client contact details every month ourselves (1 point)
- We know we need to do this and we mean to get started soon (0 points)

THIRD DIMENSION: OUTSTANDING CONFIDENCE

Creating a compelling vision with the team

23. In order to make the best use of everyone's natural talents ...

- "Here is the vision we came up with a few months ago when we last got together to review it. (3 points)
- The partners / directors have written something, but everyone has their own version of it. (2 points)
- We often talk about why we come to work (1 point)
- See the mission statement hanging up in reception (or in the filing cabinet). (0 points)

24. My general level of motivation would be best described as ...

- Superb – I look forward to coming back from holidays and getting back to work (3 points)
- Generally good – but when I take a break it takes a few days to get going again (2 points)
- Variable – an oases of enthusiasm and occasional interest in a desert of boredom (1 point)
- Doing this just for the money / kids / employees etc. (0 points)

25. When I think about my fellow team-members ...

- I appreciate and feel appreciated by superb colleagues (3 points)
- In general they are a good group, but with one or two looming problems (2 points)
- I don't have a team (1 point)
- I want to hide when I go into work (0 points)

Discovering and practicing increased confidence

26. My favourite way of boosting professional confidence is:

- Celebrating action and success, constantly discovering that competence follows confidence (3 points)
- By engaging a supportive team and/or coach who will encourage me to take bigger leaps (2 points)
- By making occasional visits outside my comfort zone (1 point)
- By reading inspirational books and attending seminars (0 points)

27. Knowing that setbacks are a frequent characteristic of professional life ...

- I have learned to dust myself off within hours, seeing rejection as evidence of effort (3 points)
- I employ supportive advisors and team-members as protection against 'down days' (2 points)
- I've got ample insurance, reserves, and legal protection (1 point)
- I minimise the risk of setback and disappointment by taking few risks (0 points)

28. Our confidence in ourselves is fully expressed in the working environment.

- We are proud of our surroundings and website, and can welcome any client any time (3 points)
- While not particularly impressive, everything works and productivity is high (2 points)
- Our facilities are in need of upgrading, there are missing pieces for a good client journey (1 point)
- We are continually hampered by technology that doesn't work (0 points)

Enjoying time for life

29. All work and no play can make Jack a very dull professional!

- I work less than 175 days per year, and have at least 20 things I like doing outside work (3 points)
- I rarely work at weekends, and never more than 225 days per year (2 points)
- I have regular holidays, but sometimes work crazy hours in between (1 point)
- Holidays create stress – either preparing to go and catching up when I come back (0 points)

30. Personal relationships either support us or drag us down.

- My family life is exactly as I would want it (3 points)
- Even with some problems, I am grateful for what I have got (2 points)
- If I could get some personal issues sorted, I would be able to enjoy work more (1 point)
- I am using my work to hide from home or loneliness (0 points)

31. Where does work fit into life?

- I live fully in my work as I do with family, friends, fun and favourites (3 points)
- I think I have got the balance right – my lifestyle is healthy (2 points)
- My work is my life. I define myself by what I do. (1 point)
- I am constantly trying to balance work and life. (0 points)

Being a model among peers

32. Outstanding Professionals love being an inspiration to others, they love making a difference:

- I have always been active in my professional body, community, or other area where I choose to contribute (3 points)
- I plan to increase my level of involvement / contribution over the next 6 months (2 points)
- I have had to let go of commitments – I tried but could not fit them in. (1 point)
- There's just not enough time for this (0 points)

33. What's it all for?

- My values are fully expressed in my professional life and are an acknowledged inspiration to others. Winning the lottery would change little. If I had only 6 months left, there would be no regrets. (3 points)
- I have a few hills to climb yet! (2 points)
- I am successful in many ways, but who will remember this in a decade? (1 point)
- At least it puts food on the table. Wish there was another way. (There is.) (0 points)

Well done - you finished it.

The half-hearted have given up by now – so give yourself an extra point!

	Points
Total Points – First Dimension	
Outstanding Client Focus:	_____
Total Points – Second Dimension	
Quality Business:	_____
Total Points – Third Dimension	
Outstanding Confidence:	_____
For completing the questionnaire:	1
TOTAL POINTS ALL SECTIONS:	_____
<i>(max 100)</i>	

I encourage you to go the extra mile and answer the following questions...

Rate each of the following challenges as you currently see them.

(Rate each between 1-10, 10= "BIG challenge" 1= "teeny challenge")

- Clarity on goals and objectives _____
- Time management and personal productivity _____
- Developing a team _____
- Hiring support staff _____
- Clarity on the service you provide _____
- Fighting to clear limiting beliefs _____
- Marketing skills _____
- Life balance _____
- Business focus _____
- Self esteem / self confidence _____
- People you rely on _____
- People you associate with _____
- Ability to influence others _____
- Pricing your services _____
- Satisfaction with past decisions _____
- Lead generation _____
- Lead conversion _____
- Personal resilience _____
- Accountability _____
- Business progress _____
- Personal motivation _____

Personal Earnings

Last Year

___ Under €100,000

___ €100,000 - €500,000

___ €500,000 - €1,000,000

Current Year

___ Under €100,000

___ €100,000 - €500,000

___ €500,000 - €1,000,000

Next Year (anticipated)

___ Under €100,000

___ €100,000 - €500,000

___ €500,000 - €1,000,000

What is your current strategy for building your business?

What are your 3 biggest accomplishments in the last 5 years?

What do you consider to be your 3 biggest strengths?

What is your long-term vision for your business and personal goals?

What are the 3 biggest obstacles you want to overcome to get your business to the next BIG level? (list them in order, with the most pressing issue being #1)

What do you find most difficult in moving yourself forward with your business and achieving your goals?

If there was one thing you could change in your business or your life, what would it be?

Who supports you in developing you and your business, keeping you motivated, accountable to get things done, and providing you with the know-how and strategies to get you to where you want to be?

What supports do you need to put in place to help you overcome your obstacles, keep you focused and guide you to move you and your business forward?

Congratulations and well done. You have now highlighted the areas of your business / career that are most important for you to develop in order to create an outstanding life for yourself.

If you need to discuss any of the areas that came up for you during this assessment please feel free to contact me.

Here's to Your success.



Paul Davis



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