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**Donald Cooper** is respected by clients in over 40 industries as both a “thought leader” and a passionate visionary in the areas of marketing, service and business excellence. Drawing from his real life experience as a world-class manufacturer, award-winning retailer and business speaker, he has helped thousands of businesses throughout the world to add more real value to their customers’ lives...and more dollars to their bottom lines.

To subscribe to Donald’s thought-provoking, idea-generating, **FREE** monthly electronic **Newsletter**, email us at [newsletter@donaldcooper.com](mailto:newsletter@donaldcooper.com).

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## **Attention business owners...are you paying yourself twice?**

If you're the owner of a business, it should be paying you twice. That is, unless your business is really just an expensive, money-sucking hobby, or your "neat fort" to hide in.

First, it should pay you a salary for the work that you do. A salary that's equivalent to what you'd make working somewhere else, or what you'd have to pay an outsider to do your job. Second, the business should pay you a return on invested capital that's three or four percentage points higher than what you could generate if the money was competently and passively invested, allowing you do something else wonderful with your life.

Sadly, many business owners don't even pay themselves once and, even more sadly, some take a second job to subsidize their business. This may occasionally make sense in the startup phase, but as an ongoing strategy, it's just plain stupid!

Every month I run into dozens of businesses that are not making, and will likely never make, enough money to justify either the investment or the effort. Clearly, they exist for some other reason...usually to be somebody's "neat fort" where they go every day to hide from reality.

A few months ago, after a speech in Las Vegas, I spent two hours coaching a restaurant owner from a small town in Iowa. His pizza restaurant was losing so much money that he had a second job in a factory, that he hated, to subsidize the restaurant. I asked him why he had decided to be a restaurateur in an agricultural community of 1200 people in the middle of nowhere and he said that he was afraid that if he went to a larger town, he'd be a failure. He said that when their children were born, they moved to this town for "lifestyle reasons". They didn't want their children to grow up in a city with drug dealers on every corner.

Since the beginning of wisdom is the recognition of reality, I gave him a little reality check. I said, "Let's review your situation. You're getting up at 5:00 AM five days a week to go to a job that you hate so that you can own a restaurant that's losing money. You get home at 11:00 PM seven nights a week, haven't seen your kids in six weeks and your wife is thinking of leaving you. Pay attention, the lifestyle thing isn't working here. You're a failure now!"

I told him that he needs to be in a town of 20,000 to 40,000 people to make a go of his restaurant vision...and the lifestyle would be a whole lot better than where they are now. We developed a Plan whereby he would go back home, sit down with his family, admit that the current "plan" isn't working and then make a list of what's really important to them, individually and collectively, in the areas of education, personal safety, recreational pursuits, culture and the arts, climate, proximity to other family members and anything else they could think of.

After designing their extraordinary life, I suggested that they pick areas of the country, and then specific communities of 20,000 to 40,000 people where the key factors of their newly designed life are abundant. They should visit a few of these towns, scope them out and make a decision. Sadly, most people are living their lives by accident...not by design.

So, if you're a business owner, are you paying yourself twice, once, or not at all...and what does your answer tell you about some key issues that need to be dealt with in your business and your life?

For more information on how Donald Cooper can help you redefine and reinvent your business to create, deliver and communicate compelling, customer-owning Value, visit our website at [www.donaldcooper.com](http://www.donaldcooper.com) , email us at [info@donaldcooper.com](mailto:info@donaldcooper.com) or contact us by telephone in Toronto, Canada at 1-(416) 252-3704.