

THE DONALD COOPER CORPORATION

Speaking and coaching internationally on management, marketing and profitability



Management tool #B-1: ©

In our business, who's proactively 'running the show'? ...the 'straight goods' about working 'ON' our business!

Most of us spend 90% of our time working 'IN' our business and very little time actually working 'ON' it. The result is that no one is proactively 'running the show'.

Lots of business coaches and consultants tell you that you should work 'ON' your business, but they never tell you exactly what that means. So, here are my six key elements of working 'ON' your business. Working 'ON' your business is...

1. Improving your product or service offering and the customer experience in order to differentiate your business and deliver extraordinary value. If you don't do this one, nothing else matters. The world doesn't need one more mediocre 'anything'.
2. Proactively marketing to existing customers, prime prospects and key influencers.
3. Developing, listening to and managing your team. Creating a business environment that attracts, challenges, engages and grows top performers...and deals quickly and effectively with non-performance. You can't grow your business without growing your people. Be a 'talent magnet'.
4. Improving operational efficiency in every part of your business. You cannot be price competitive and profitable without developing world-class operational efficiency ...even in a small business.
5. Understanding and studying your 'numbers' to make better and more profitable decisions. Small increases in your prices and sales, and small reductions in your operating expenses can make a significant improvement in your bottom line.
6. Visualizing and planning your extraordinary future and, if necessary, rethinking part or all of your business model. The most effective "Tool" for creating a clear and effective Vision for your business is Donald Cooper's 34 page **Vision Critical Guide**, available for just \$24 at donaldcooper.com.

If working 'ON' the business is that straightforward and that important, why aren't we all doing it? There are three main reasons:

Reason #1 for not working 'ON' our business: Proactively working 'ON' the business is not what we know and love: Most of us get into business, not because we love or even understand the 'business' side of things, but because we're good at designing, making, selling, fixing or doing something....or because we love some particular activity.

For example, we're a great lawyer, veterinarian, cook, designer, machinist, sales person, financial planner, or whatever. Or, we have a great passion for something like music, skiing, cars, or scuba diving and we think it would be cool to open a business that makes, sells or fixes stuff that we love.

Passion and skill are important, but now we're **in the business** of doing whatever it is that we're good at, or passionate about. But when we should be working 'ON' the all-important challenges of value creation, marketing, management and profitability, we find it more comfortable to work 'IN' the business, doing the day-to-day stuff that's easy and safe.

So we retreat to the familiar...to doing the things we're comfortable with and good at. We become poorly paid employees in our own business and management becomes *"One damn thing after another."* Sound familiar?

Reason #2 for not working 'ON' our business: We simply don't know where to start...so we don't get started at all. No problem, we've got that covered. We have three excellent free 'Business Assessment Tools' to help you determine what needs fixing or doing and where to start working 'ON' your business. These three tools, our **'Key Challenge Audit Sheet'** (Business Tool #A-1) **'The Service Challenge Audit Sheet'** (Business Tool #A-2) and the **'What's working and not working in your business'** (Business Tool #A-4) are part of this complete set of Business Tools. Use them to identify what needs doing and fixing in your business...and then prioritize where to start, determine what you can fix yourself...and where you will need help.

Reason #3 for not working 'ON' our business: There's just no time. "Yes" there is no time until you make the time. To start, commit a minimum of 4 hours a week, every week, to proactively work 'ON' your business. For many folks, Tuesday mornings seem to work best...but you can pick any time that works for you, for the demands of your business, and for your own biological clock.

So, right now, commit to a specific time to work "ON" your business every week, and stick to it. Create a file for each of the 6 key 'working 'ON' your business' activities listed on page one, and work on those files by assessing your current reality, developing ideas, learning from 'the best' and, sometimes, having the courage to do what has never been done before.



Involve your team, assign tasks, make decisions, implement and follow up. Your front-line people know stuff and they hate it when you don't ask. This whole process will engage and energize you and your team in a most extraordinary way, and you'll quickly discover who has the ability and the interest to help you grow the business...and who doesn't.

If you're a one-person business at this point, you *are* the team. *"Congrats ...you're it!"* You still have to work 'ON' your business. No whining!

Donald Cooper, MBA, CSP, HoF, has been both a world-class manufacturer and an award-winning fashion retailer. Now, as a Toronto-based international management speaker and coach, he helps business owners and managers to rethink, refocus and re-energize their business to sell more, manage smarter, grow their bottom line...and have a life.

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