



STRATEGY GUIDE

Manage today and shape tomorrow.



CRAWFORD

INTRODUCTION.

This guide is a collection of thoughts and a curation of approaches learned and developed through helping ambitious business owners build stronger more profitable companies.

Whilst all clients and their situations are different, at the point ambitious business owners reach out to discuss the benefits of an external view, and extra horsepower to build a stronger company I've observed some common themes:

TIME AND RESOURCES.

Growing a business, or changing its profit position, at least for the better, is rarely easy.

Working in the business and on the business at the same time, can be daunting. Time can be the business owners scarcest resource. Most owners have a sense of the future they want, and a timeframe in mind for getting there, however, find both managing today and shaping tomorrow difficult.

A BUSINESS OWNERS THREE HATS.

1. Entrepreneur
2. Technician
3. Manager

Taken from Michael Gerber's excellent E-Myth revisited, where he describes his belief that business owners are very often comfortable with two of the three hats "Technician" and "Entrepreneur" yet find the "Manager" role less natural. In essence business owners enjoy idea creation more than day-to-day management and find solace in the Technician role of doing work in the company at the expense of working on the company.

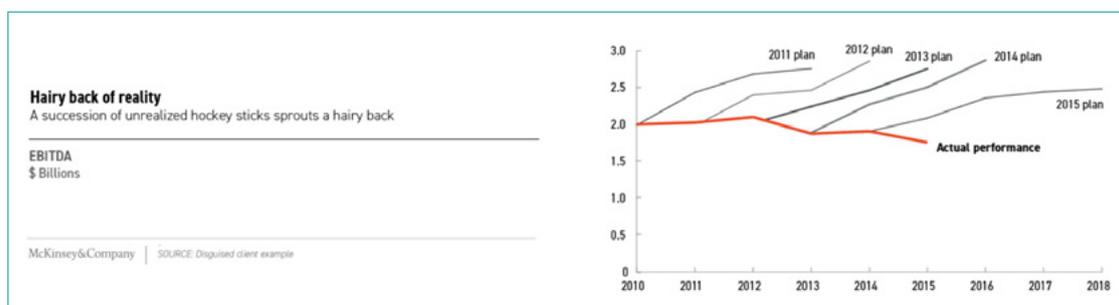
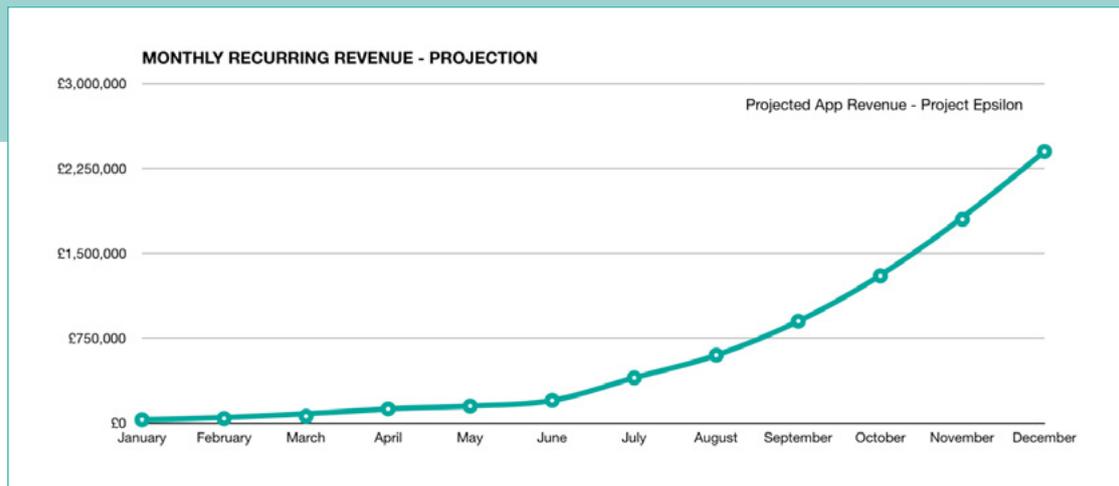
BUSINESSES MORE OFTEN DIE FROM INDIGESTION THAN STARVATION.

Perhaps a consequence of time scarcity and a bias toward idea creation, businesses rarely struggle to meet their goals through a lack of opportunity, more often progress is impeded by taking on too many things at once. Michael Porter, perhaps, the best known thinker on business strategy tells us, "strategy is choosing what not to do".

HOCKEY STICKS AND HAIRY BACKS.

Through the financial planning process most businesses set out an annual budget, often this is back-end loaded, with the improvements in performance ramping up through the year, too often, these gains are not realised, yet the management team predict the same set of gains, with different supporting strategies year in year out.

The hockey stick graph, where growth in revenues and or profits climb rapidly towards the end of the planning period are synonymous with strategic planning. McKinsey and Company in their excellent book 'Strategy beyond the Hockey Stick' describe as a 'hairy back' the picture you get when you join several years of unrealised hockey stick growth plans together.



IT TAKES BIG MOVES TO BEAT THE ODDS.

The paradox is, that where great strategy is well implemented the results often create a hockey stick performance. Lack of time, and resources, too many candidate strategies, apathy from the realisation that the once high growth business has developed a hairy back can combine to prevent leaders and teams to think big enough or allocate sufficient resource for this to be the year or idea where a hockey stick performance is realised.

As an organisation grows then demand for resources grow with it. Sharing business resource evenly across divisions, product and service lines, keeps the peace between managers however doesn't usually represent the real situation where opportunity is unevenly spread across the business.

This guide should help ambitious owners in similar position's take control of their strategy planning and help them both manage today and shape tomorrow.

OUR STRATEGY TOOLS:

- 1. Understand the reach of strategy in your business.**
- 2. Strategic planning template.**

DEFINING STRATEGY.

GOOD STRATEGY AND BAD STRATEGY - THE DIFFERENCE AND WHY IT MATTERS.

One of the challenges surrounding strategy is the wealth of books, articles, podcasts, models and more on the topic. Even if you had time to read, study and listen to them all, many contradict each other and the case studies more often than not are huge, decades old companies or incredibly fast-growth silicon valley start-ups, lessening the resonance of the lessons within, for those of us involved in more modest enterprises.

That said there are many great resources to learn from, one of my favourites is Good Strategy by Rumelt, which is available for free on our site and contains, an excellent definition, as the title suggests, for good and bad strategy. I've paraphrased Rumelt on the next page.

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