

WITH 36 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE  
AND 1,000+ CASES



# IT'S NOT ABOUT MONEY

**WHY PURPOSE,  
PEOPLE, AND  
PRINCIPLES  
OUTWEIGH DOLLARS**

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## Chapter 1: Fundamentally

At the most fundamental level, business isn't about dollars and cents. It's about solving problems, creating value, and building trust. If you lose sight of that, money becomes empty – and usually short-lived.

Think about it: the strongest businesses are the ones that stick to their fundamentals. Just as elite athletes don't stop practicing the basics – handballing, tackling, fitness – successful business owners never abandon the essentials of consistency, integrity, and value creation.

### The Core Building Blocks

1. **Integrity** – Do what you say you'll do. Your word is the foundation of every relationship.
2. **Consistency** – Success isn't built on one big win but on showing up day after day.
3. **Value Creation** – Your business exists to make someone's life or business better. If you forget this, no amount of marketing will save you.

## When Fundamentals Are Forgotten

It's easy to get distracted by shiny opportunities – the quick contract, the shortcut, the risky partnership that promises overnight profits. But when the fundamentals slip, cracks appear.

- A business that chases revenue without building quality will eventually lose customers.
- A leader who prioritises appearances over substance will eventually lose staff loyalty.
- A company that avoids paying entitlements or taxes will eventually face the ATO – and possibly liquidation.

### Case Study: The Contractor Who Cut Corners

A Melbourne contractor was winning big jobs and raking in cash. But to save time, he began cutting safety corners and underpaying workers. For a while, the money was great. Then one accident triggered an investigation. Contracts dried up, suppliers pulled away, and his reputation was gone.

He forgot the fundamentals – that his real job was to deliver safe, reliable work. The money didn't protect him once the basics collapsed.

## Practical Guidance: Getting Back to Fundamentals

If you feel like your business is spinning in circles, go back to basics. Ask yourself:

1. **Why did I start this business?** Write it down. Was it to serve customers, solve a problem, or build something meaningful?
2. **Am I delivering on my promises?** If customers, staff, or creditors would say “no,” fix those gaps first.
3. **Where am I chasing short-term wins?** Be honest. Are you sacrificing long-term trust for quick money?
4. **What’s my non-negotiable?** Identify one principle you won’t compromise, no matter what.

## The Fundamental Test

A simple exercise:

- Imagine your biggest client asked your smallest client what it’s like to work with you.
- What would they say?
- Would their answer reflect your values, or just your invoices?

## Mini Case Study: The Butcher Who Stayed True

During tough times, a regional butcher refused to compromise on quality. While competitors dropped prices and cut corners, he stuck to sourcing local meat and treating customers like neighbours. His profit margins were thinner for a while, but when economic conditions improved, he was the one with loyal customers – and the others had closed their doors.

**Takeaway.**  
**Fundamentally, business is about value and trust. Money follows when you get those right. Lose sight of them, and the money disappears too.**





## Chapter 2: The Choices We Make

Every business is the sum of the choices its leaders make. Some are monumental – expanding interstate, taking on investors, hiring staff. Others are deceptively small – answering a phone call, filing BAS on time, or speaking honestly to a supplier.

Over time, these choices compound. Like compound interest, they either build momentum or erode stability.

### The Ripple Effect of Decisions

1. **Small ignored debts** become legal threats.
2. **Small honest conversations** become goodwill and flexibility later.
3. **Small investments in staff** create loyalty that carries you through downturns.

It's rarely one decision that breaks a business; it's the accumulation of little ones, avoided or made hastily, that tip it over the edge.

## Short-Term Fix vs. Long-Term Vision

- Cutting corners boosts today's profits but erodes tomorrow's trust.
- Discounting heavily fills tills today but weakens your brand.
- Delaying uncomfortable calls feels easier now but creates bigger battles later.

The strongest directors play the long game.

### Case Study: The Cafe Owner Who Chose Honesty

Samantha, a Geelong cafe owner, couldn't keep up with rent after COVID. Instead of dodging her landlord, she invited him and her accountant to a meeting. She explained her situation and proposed reduced rent for six months. He agreed. That single honest decision saved her business.

### Practical Framework: The Decision Filter

Before making a choice, ask four questions:

1. Does it align with my values?
2. What impact will it have on people (staff, customers, suppliers)?
3. Will it look wise in three years?
4. Have I sought trusted advice?

## Common Pitfalls in Decision-Making

- **Delay:** Hoping problems vanish instead of acting early.
- **Isolation:** Making big decisions alone.
- **Fear:** Letting panic, not principle, drive your choices.

**Takeaway.**  
**Every choice compounds. The question is whether it builds your business or erodes it.**





## Chapter 3: It's About People

Behind every invoice, every debt, and every balance sheet are people. Business is people serving people. Forget that, and you lose your edge.

### Customers: More Than Transactions

Customers buy trust, not just products. They remember how you made them feel.

- Do you deliver on promises?
- Do you fix mistakes quickly?
- Do you treat them as relationships or transactions?

### Mini Case Study: The Florist Who Remembered

A Bendigo florist built loyalty by remembering anniversaries and birthdays. Clients felt seen – and kept coming back.

### **Staff: Your Secret Weapon**

Your team can be your greatest asset or your biggest liability. Staff who feel valued will back you when times are tough. Staff who feel ignored will leave – or worse, stay and disengage.

**Tip:** Training costs less than replacing staff.

### **Suppliers: Silent Partners**

Suppliers decide whether you survive cash flow crunches. If you've built trust, they'll extend terms or negotiate.

#### **Case Study:**

##### **The Manufacturer Who Picked Up the Phone**

A Melbourne manufacturer hit a cash crunch. Instead of hiding, he rang his three biggest suppliers, explained the situation, and offered a plan. They all agreed. His honesty preserved both the supply chain and his reputation.

### **Creditors & Advisors: The Uncomfortable Allies**

Directors often avoid creditors (especially the ATO). But they're people too. A respectful, proactive approach often leads to more options. Advisors, meanwhile, are the people who see blind spots you don't.

### **Community: The Bigger Circle**

Reputation spreads quickly. Giving back, supporting local causes, and engaging with community pays back in unexpected ways.

**Takeaway.**  
**Business isn't about paperwork – it's about people. Honour the relationships, and the profits will follow.**





## Chapter 4: It's About Trust

Trust is the oxygen of business. You rarely notice it when it's flowing, but when it's gone, you suffocate fast.

### Why Trust Matters

- **Customers** forgive mistakes if they trust you.
- **Staff** stay loyal to leaders they trust.
- **Creditors & suppliers** negotiate if they trust your honesty.

Without trust, every interaction becomes defensive. With trust, even conflict can be resolved productively.

### Three Arenas of Trust

1. **With Customers** – Deliver consistently, own mistakes.
2. **With Staff** – Communicate clearly, follow through.
3. **With Creditors & Advisors** – Honesty early beats excuses later.

### Case Study: The Accountant Who Lost It All

A suburban accountant promised big refunds by exaggerating deductions. For a while, business boomed. Then the ATO audited. Clients left in droves, his reputation collapsed, and within a year his practice shut. He had money but no trust – and money couldn't save him.

## How to Build Trust Daily

- Do what you say.
- Admit mistakes fast.
- Stay consistent – in tone, behaviour, and principles.
- Guard your reputation – it's harder to rebuild than to lose.

## Rebuilding Trust

1. Admit the failure, no excuses.
2. Apologise sincerely.
3. Over-correct – fix it bigger than the mistake.
4. Give it time.

## Mini Case Study: The Cafe That Owned Its Mistake

A cafe served undercooked food. Instead of brushing it off, the owner apologised, refunded, and gave a voucher. The customer came back – and told friends.

**Takeaway.**  
**Trust is hard to earn, easy to lose, and nearly impossible to fake. Protect it like treasure.**



## Chapter 5: It's About Resilience

Resilience is the ability to bend without breaking, to adapt without giving up. In business, resilience isn't just about surviving storms – it's about using them to grow stronger.

### The Myth of Endless Strength

Resilience doesn't mean never feeling stress. It means facing it, working through it, and coming out wiser. Even the strongest leaders stumble – the difference is they get back up.

### What Resilience Looks Like in Business

1. **Financial:** Having buffers, plans, and options when income dips.
2. **Emotional:** Managing stress without burning out.
3. **Operational:** Adapting processes when markets change.
4. **Relational:** Maintaining trust with staff and creditors in crisis.

### Case Study: The Builder Who Bounced Back

James, a Sydney builder, faced near liquidation after unpaid debts threatened his licence. With the help of an insolvency advisor, he entered restructuring, negotiated terms, and kept his licence. He didn't avoid the storm – he learned to sail through it.

## Building Resilience Before You Need It

- **Keep tax lodgements up to date.** The ATO is more flexible with directors who are compliant.
- **Build relationships early.** Don't wait for a crisis to talk to suppliers and staff.
- **Protect your health.** A sick director can't run a healthy business.
- **Have advisors on speed dial.** Resilience is knowing who to call before things break.

## Practical Guidance: The Resilience Toolkit

1. Maintain three months of operating costs in reserve if possible.
2. Schedule quarterly reviews with advisors.
3. Develop a crisis communication plan for staff and customers.
4. Practice personal resilience – exercise, rest, and boundaries.

**Takeaway.**  
**Resilience isn't about being unbreakable – it's about being adaptable. Businesses that bend, survive. Businesses that snap, don't.**



## Chapter 6: It's About Purpose

Money motivates for a while, but purpose sustains you. When business gets tough – and it always does – it's purpose that keeps you going when the numbers don't.

### Why Purpose Matters

- **Clarity in chaos:** Purpose helps you prioritise when everything feels urgent.
- **Resilience in adversity:** A strong “why” gives you energy when motivation runs dry.
- **Attraction:** Staff and customers are drawn to businesses with a clear sense of meaning.

### Finding Your “Why”

Ask yourself:

1. Why did I start this business?
2. Who benefits most from what I do?
3. What would happen if my business disappeared tomorrow?

Your answers reveal whether you're just chasing money or creating impact.

**Case Study:****The Accountant Who Rediscovered Purpose**

An accountant in Brisbane felt burnt out and considered selling. His days were filled with compliance work that drained him. Then he reframed his purpose: helping small business owners sleep at night by knowing their finances were under control. He shifted services toward advisory and client education. His revenue grew, but more importantly, his energy returned.

**Practical Guidance: Embedding Purpose**

1. Write your purpose statement and share it with staff.
2. Measure success by impact as well as profit.
3. Align decisions with purpose – if it doesn't serve your "why," reconsider.

**Takeaway.**

**Profit is fuel, but purpose is direction.  
Without it, even profitable businesses  
lose their way.**



# value

## Chapter 7: It's About Value

Money follows value. When you consistently create value – for customers, staff, and community – the financials take care of themselves.

### What Value Really Means

Value isn't just about being cheap or offering a product. It's about:

- Solving a problem.
- Saving time or effort.
- Delivering an experience.
- Exceeding expectations.

### Customers: Value Beyond Price

Many businesses race to the bottom on price. But the strongest ones compete on value. Customers will pay more for reliability, trust, and consistent delivery.

### Mini Case Study: The Cleaner Who Raised Prices

A cleaning company in Melbourne raised its prices but also raised service levels – better communication, follow-ups, and guaranteed results. Instead of losing clients, referrals increased. Customers valued certainty more than cost.

### **Staff: Value Exchange**

Staff don't just work for money. They value respect, development, and a sense of purpose. When you invest in them, they repay you with loyalty and effort.

### **Community: Giving Value Back**

The most resilient businesses add value to their communities – sponsoring local events, mentoring startups, or contributing expertise. That goodwill becomes marketing you can't buy.

### **Practical Framework: The Value Multiplier**

To increase value in your business, ask:

1. How can we make this easier?
2. How can we make this faster?
3. How can we make this more personal?
4. How can we make this more reliable?

## **Takeaway.**

**Value isn't what you say – it's what customers, staff, and the community feel. Focus on creating it, and money will follow.**



## Chapter 8: It's About Leadership

Leadership is what sets the tone. In times of crisis, it's not the balance sheet people look to – it's the leader.

### Leadership in Calm vs. Crisis

In good times, leadership feels easy. In tough times, true leaders emerge. They:

- Face reality, not fantasy.
- Communicate clearly and often.
- Take responsibility instead of shifting blame.
- Stay calm under pressure.

### Case Study: The Hospitality Owner Who Stood Tall

During a lockdown, a Sydney restaurant owner called his team together. He explained the financial strain, promised transparency, and asked for ideas. Staff volunteered to reduce hours temporarily. They survived because he led with honesty, not denial.

## The Cost of Poor Leadership

- Staff disengage when leaders hide.
- Customers lose confidence when leaders over-promise.
- Creditors push harder when directors avoid conversations.

## Practical Guidance: Leading Well

1. **Communicate more than you think is necessary.**  
Silence breeds fear.
2. **Be visible.** Staff need to see you present and engaged.
3. **Share the vision.** Even in crisis, explain where you're heading.
4. **Invest in yourself.** Leaders who burn out can't carry others.

## The Leadership Balance

Leadership isn't about always having the answer. It's about creating space for solutions, empowering others, and setting the tone.

**Tip:** Sometimes leadership is simply admitting, "I don't know – but I'll find out."

## Takeaway.

**Leadership is the anchor in stormy seas. When money is tight and pressure is high, people don't follow spreadsheets – they follow leaders.**

## Chapter 9: It's About Community

No business exists in isolation. Every business is part of a wider community – customers, suppliers, competitors, industry, and local neighbourhoods. The stronger your ties to that community, the more resilient your business becomes.

### Why Community Matters

- **Reputation travels fast.** Word of mouth can make or break you.
- **Support networks matter.** A well-connected business gets help faster in crisis.
- **Shared goodwill multiplies.** Helping others often circles back when you least expect it.

### Case Study:

#### The Hardware Store That Became a Hub

A family-owned hardware store in a regional town built loyalty by sponsoring local sports clubs, offering work experience to school kids, and hosting DIY workshops. When a national chain opened nearby, many locals stayed loyal. They weren't just shopping for nails – they were supporting their community partner.

### **Practical Guidance: Building Community Strength**

1. Be visible locally. Attend events, support fundraisers, and connect with other owners.
2. Give first. Share knowledge, mentor younger businesses, or sponsor community activities.
3. Engage staff. Encourage your team to represent the business in community activities.
4. Align with values. Don't just give money to anything – choose causes that reflect your business ethos.

### **Community Beyond Geography**

In today's world, your "community" can also be online or industry-based. Participating in forums, networks, and associations builds credibility and connections beyond your postcode.

### **Takeaway.**

**Community is both a safety net and a growth engine. When you contribute to it, it gives back tenfold.**



## Chapter 10: It's About Legacy

Money pays the bills, but legacy defines you. Long after the invoices are forgotten, your legacy is what people remember – how you treated staff, customers, and the community.

### The Two Types of Legacy

1. **Intentional Legacy** – The values, culture, and impact you deliberately build.
2. **Unintentional Legacy** – The reputation you leave by default, for better or worse.

### Legacy in Action

- **Staff legacy:** Are you the boss who built careers, or the one people warn others about?
- **Customer legacy:** Are you remembered for honesty and care, or for cutting corners?
- **Community legacy:** Did you contribute, or did you just take?

### Case Study:

#### The Builder Who Built More Than Homes

A small builder in Melbourne always took on one apprentice per year, even when times were tough. Over 20 years, he trained dozens of young tradespeople who still speak highly of him. His legacy isn't just the houses he built – it's the people he shaped.

### Practical Guidance: Building Your Legacy Deliberately

1. **Define what you want to be remembered for.** Write it down.
2. **Align daily actions with it.** Legacy isn't grand gestures; it's small daily behaviours.
3. **Communicate it.** Share your vision with staff so they know what you stand for.
4. **Check regularly.** Ask: if I stepped away tomorrow, what would people say about me?

### Takeaway.

**Legacy isn't something you build at the end – it's built every day. Make it intentional, not accidental.**

## Chapter 11: Money Still Matters

Let's be clear: money isn't irrelevant. Businesses that run out of cash don't survive. But money is fuel, not the destination. It enables impact, purpose, and legacy – but it shouldn't be the only scorecard.

### Why Money Still Matters

- **Cash flow is oxygen.** Without it, even purposeful businesses fail.
- **Profit funds growth.** You can't expand or invest without surplus.
- **Financial discipline builds trust.** Creditors and staff want to see stability.

### The Danger of Obsession

- Chasing profit at the expense of values leads to burnout and reputational collapse.
- Businesses that only measure success in dollars often struggle to retain staff and customers.

### Case Study:

#### The Retailer Who Got the Balance Right

A clothing retailer focused on fair pricing, ethical sourcing, and strong staff culture. Profits weren't sky-high, but they were sustainable. During downturns, loyal customers kept coming back – not just for clothes, but because they trusted the business. The money worked because it was balanced with principles.

### Practical Guidance: Balancing Money and Meaning

1. **Track the numbers.** You can't ignore the financials – monitor cash flow, margins, and debts.
2. **Define success beyond money.** Add measures like staff retention, customer satisfaction, and community impact.
3. **Avoid false economies.** Cutting costs that damage quality or trust is short-term thinking.
4. **Use money wisely.** Invest it back into people, systems, and resilience.

### Takeaway.

**Money matters, but it's not everything. Treat it as fuel for the journey, not the destination itself.**

## Chapter 12: Practical Tools – Frameworks for Business Owners

Theory is helpful, but business owners under pressure need tools they can actually use. Here are practical frameworks to apply straight away.

### 1. The Crisis Checklist

When things feel overwhelming, run through this:

- Are my **tax lodgements** up to date?
- Have I spoken with **suppliers and creditors**?
- Do I have a **cash flow forecast** for the next 90 days?
- Who in my **inner circle** have I consulted this week?
- Am I **looking after myself** (sleep, stress, health)?

### 2. The 4-Box Decision Grid

Draw four boxes on a page. Label them:

- **Urgent & Important** – Do now.
- **Important but Not Urgent** – Schedule.
- **Urgent but Not Important** – Delegate.
- **Not Urgent & Not Important** – Eliminate.

This simple tool helps prioritise when stress makes everything feel urgent.

### 3. The “3 People” Rule

Before making any major decision, run it by three types of people:

- Someone with **experience**.
- Someone with **objectivity**.
- Someone who will **challenge you**.

### 4. The Weekly Review Habit

Every Friday, ask:

- What went well?
- What didn't?
- What needs to change next week?

This builds rhythm and accountability.

## Takeaway.

**Tools don't solve problems on their own — but they create structure that allows you to make better choices.**

## Chapter 13: Case Studies – Lessons from the Real World

Stories cut through theory. Here are three examples that highlight the themes of this eGuide.

### Case Study 1:

#### The Transport Business That Recovered

A Ballarat trucking company owed over \$500,000. Instead of folding, the directors worked with a restructuring advisor. They entered a Small Business Restructuring plan, offered creditors 25 cents in the dollar, and kept operating. Two years later, the debts were cleared, and 12 jobs were saved.

**Lesson:** Honest conversations and formal processes can save businesses.

### **Case Study 2: The Retailer Who Chose Legacy**

A clothing shop owner in Melbourne always hired young staff and invested in their training. Years later, many former staff became loyal customers, suppliers, or advocates.

**Lesson:** Legacy isn't just about money – it's about people who carry your influence forward.

### **Case Study 3: The Cafe That Owned Its Mistake**

A regional cafe served undercooked food to a customer. Instead of ignoring it, the owner apologised, refunded, and gave a voucher. The customer not only returned but told friends about the honesty.

**Lesson:** Trust, once protected, multiplies.

## **Takeaway.**

**Every story shows that money alone never saves a business. People, trust, and values do.**



## Chapter 14: Pulling It All Together

By now, the theme of this eGuide should be crystal clear: **it's not about money.**

Yes, money matters. It's the fuel that keeps the engine running. Without it, businesses stall. But money alone never makes a business truly successful. I've seen people with more cash than they could ever spend who were still stressed, broken, or empty. And I've seen businesses that didn't look flashy on paper but were rich in trust, loyalty, and meaning – and those were the ones that lasted.

### Reframing Success

Success isn't measured only by profit margins. It's measured by:

- **Stability:** Does your business have resilience built into it?
- **Trust:** Do people believe what you say?
- **Purpose:** Do you know why you get up every morning to do this work?
- **Impact:** Are you leaving the world – or at least your corner of it – better than you found it?

When you bring those pieces together, the money tends to follow naturally. When you chase only money, you often lose everything else in the process.

## Alignment is Everything

Think of your business like a car. The money is the fuel. But if your wheels (values), steering (purpose), and engine (trust) aren't aligned, all the fuel in the world won't get you where you want to go. Worse, you'll burn out faster.

## The Pattern I've Seen

After decades of working with businesses in crisis, I've noticed a pattern:

- Those who built their business solely on profit are often the quickest to collapse when crisis comes.
- Those who built around **people, principles, and purpose** – even if their profits were modest – are the ones who can adapt, rebuild, and come back stronger.

**Key Thought: What you focus on grows. If you focus only on profit, you'll always be chasing. If you focus on building people, trust, and legacy, profit will follow you**

**Chapter 15: Conclusion – Redefining Success Beyond Dollars**

## Chapter 15: Conclusion – Redefining Success Beyond Dollars

If there's one message to take from this eGuide, it's this: **Money is important, but it's not everything.**

When you sit with a business owner who's under pressure, the conversation is rarely just about money. It's about stress, relationships, pride, shame, and the feeling of losing control. Money is the symptom – not the root cause.

### What Success Really Looks Like

True success is:

- **Sleeping at night** because you've dealt with your obligations honestly.
- **Walking into work** and seeing a team that trusts and respects you.
- **Knowing your customers** would recommend you even if times were tough.
- **Having options** because you've built resilience into your business.

That's success. And it's worth more than any short-term windfall.

## About Resolvency & Resolve Business Solutions

At Resolvency and Resolve Business Solutions, we specialise in helping business owners in financial distress.

We are not liquidators or trustees – we work for you. With more than 35 years of experience, we've guided countless owners through restructuring, turnaround, and recovery.

You don't need to face this alone. Help is only a conversation away.

To learn more, visit:

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