

Break through the growth ceiling

Want your business to really grow? The first step is to get out of its way, reports David Maida



As most businesses start to expand and pick up speed, they often run into a barrier that business development specialist Simon Mundell* calls the "ceiling of complexity". He says that business owners should recognise this syndrome and proactively take steps to deal with it.

"As you are growing your business, you start to add complexity into your business – more staff, more customers, more transactions, more freight delays, more issues and more staff problems etc. Eventually complexity will slow or stop growth in your business."

Mundell says a business can get bogged down in this situation and bounce along the ceiling of complexity for years. Most people's reaction is to start working harder, but that's not likely to help at this stage and probably compounds the problem.

"It's a bit of a minefield out there. It's a bit of a jungle. Things can come up and things can get in your way. It's about being able to navigate around those challenges."

Mundell says it's relatively easy to start growing a business, but maintaining growth is more difficult.

"You need to work on less, not more. You need to simplify your business. You've got to get out of the way."

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Mundell says that if everything your business does has to come through you, then it will only ever be as big as you are. And the bigger your business becomes, the better your lifestyle should become. You should focus on activities that energise you and stop doing the things that drain you. The things that energise you are your unique abilities.

"You know it's a unique ability when it gives you more energy than it takes. Ask yourself: 'Does this take advantage of my unique ability?' If it doesn't, don't do it."

Mundell says everyone is wired to be great at something. Instead of focusing on weaknesses or areas they need to improve on, people should be focusing on their strengths.

"Look to put people in roles that play to their strengths, not their weaknesses."

Businesses owners should also examine the role of everyone in their

team and make sure that people aren't doing things they are not good at doing.

"Stop doing those things that you are not strong in. No matter how much training you give yourself or them, if it's not your unique natural ability, you will never be naturally good at it. It will always take energy from you. It will always be stressful." **ib**

*Simon Mundell is Director of the leading New Zealand business development and coaching company The Results Group, which works with around 250 of the fastest growing businesses in the country. This article is based on a seminar presentation for ANZ SME clients called "Thinking Growth". For more information, see www.results.co.nz.

Next issue: Get the right people into your business.