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Going back to the goals: How revisiting ambitions gave Dougie Macdonald the drive to grow D and R Tyres into a turnover 365k business despite Covid-19

We have provided year end accounts to Dougie Macdonald, owner of D and R Tyres, for many years. Dougie decided to set up his own business 21 years ago following a successful career in the Royal Marines.

Dougie left his post due to a medical reason, and with the support of his brother in law, decided to dip his toe in the business world and see whether he'd do well in the fast-paced environment of a garage. With his drive and determination he succeeded and bought his brother in law out within a few years.

Knowing Dougie after years of our professional partnership, we recognized his ambition as a business owner and thought he would benefit from joining our '7 Ways to Grow' business accelerator event. Dougie had expressed his want to grow and future proof his garage and so we invited him along for our next intake.

A loss of excitement for business can stagnate growth

Dougie admitted he'd lost the burning passion and excitement you feel when first starting out in business, and said he felt like he was just ticking along rather than taking risks and pushing himself to grow. It's this that made him come along to the event, though he was cynical about whether he would learn anything tangible he could take away and implement to make a real difference.

Despite his initial hesitations, the event opened Dougie's eyes to the 7 key ways he could grow his business. He particularly took on the points of increasing customer retention rate and transactional frequency and value.

Dougie said he came away thinking "Wow there is so much more my accountant can do to help me!". As a result, he registered for a 4-hour Business Planning session with one of our business consultants where he defined clear goals and developed the techniques he'd need to grow.

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Revisiting goals - why did you set up your business in the first place?

We start with our Business Planning Sessions, revisiting the spark that started your business right at the beginning. With Dougie we revisited his passions and documented what he wanted to achieve from a personal perspective too. Dougie simply wanted to 'be the best.'

We talked about the achievable action points that he could easily adjust in his business to help it grow steadily.

We then gave Dougie some tools to help him stay focused on his goals with more drive:

- Through cashflow analysis and forecasts we advised where profit could be enhanced by offering a new range of services. We showed how even small adjustments could make a big impact.
- We helped to implement new systems including digital accounting software, which tracks every aspect of his business and allows him to make key business decisions.
- He adjusted his pricing structure and set up payment plans for customers to add some wow factors to his customer's experience. With financial planning advice, Dougie also took the plunge to invest in some new machinery, which has contributed to his success.
- Dougie adopted the OARBED mindset and made this into a poster for his office to help stay motivated. OARBED describes behaviours by splitting them into two parts: Above the line behaviours: ownership, accountability, and responsibility, Vs below the line behaviours: blame, excuses, and denial.
- We introduced Dougie to the Quadrant of Waste model, highlighting to him where he should be spending most of his time and deciding what was to be deferred or delegated. Dougie now uses this as his mantra throughout his working day to continue to stay productive.
- We now meet Dougie at a quarterly coaching session where we revisit quarterly goals and prepare a financial forecast, ensuring he remains accountable to his ambitions.

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The ultimate challenge – running a business throughout a pandemic

Despite Covid-19 D and R Tyres are set to hit £365k in trading this year and are now employing 5 staff.

During coaching sessions, we ask Dougie what his goals are. Each time his response is he just wants to be 'the best'. Being the best takes time and dedication and is hard to achieve at the best of times, let alone adding a global pandemic to the mix.

With his new 'above the line' thinking, Dougie decided to seek opportunity in a crisis and grasped the challenge to not only survive during these times - but thrive.

During lockdown we held business continuity planning coaching over the phone, supporting and advising Dougie on how to adapt and pivot.

Dougie took the bold decision to continue to keep his garage open throughout the pandemic, operating as an essential service for key workers, giving free puncture repairs to all NHS and community care workers. By building up this trust, he has since developed a strong repeat purchase and customer retention rate.

Not all heroes wear capes

We advised Dougie that now was not the time to be pushy with sales. He understood now was the time to give something back, and contacted his seat cover supplier to order additional stock, which he 'gave away' for free to NHS and community care workers. He shared this promotion on his social media channels and within days all the seat covers had gone.

As a result, he ordered a second round of seat covers and this time added face visors to his offering. He teamed up with Hoppers Signs to introduce the words '*not all heroes wear capes*' on the front of the visors. With good marketing advice, these flew out the door and people travelled from all over the region to visit the garage to get a visor.

Despite not 'selling' Dougie came out of lockdown stronger than he went in. People now remember the D and R Tyres brand for being altruistic. His credibility and charitable generosity



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enabled his brand to go viral and he is now reaping the rewards of this simple tweak to his business model.

Testimonial

"I cannot recommend the company enough. I have started working with Robson Laidler in the past 2 years. Firstly, let me say that what you think your accountant does and what RL actually do are miles apart. They have a structure to help every company to achieve their optimum business needs. So not just your Tax and VAT but business plans, strategies and budgeting support. A company I would recommend unreservedly."

If you want to experience the same support as Dougie, tailored to your own needs, see [which action plan suits you best](#). We start with a free meeting to discuss your business and personal goals and put it together into your one-page plan.

