



Do you feel like you're on a treadmill? No matter how many hours you put in, does it seem like you can't get ahead financially? Here are 7 things you can do now to stop working so hard and start making more money in your business.

1. You invest money and time in generating leads for your business. But if you or your team members aren't **following up on the leads you get**, you have wasted all that time and all that money. The lack of follow up is one of the most common mistakes I come across in business.

One big reason that salespeople or business owners don't follow up is because they manage their time poorly and spend more time chasing new leads rather than following up. Most successful salespeople know the value of **dedicating time each day** to following up. Simple techniques like setting up a default calendar for the business are a great help.

Another huge reason for a lack of follow up is that there is no **clear and simple sales process** in place that anticipates the need for follow up and shows the sales people how to follow up effectively. How well-defined is your sales process?

2. You do put in a lot of hours. You're not afraid of hard work, but where is all that hard work getting you? Putting in hours isn't the answer – putting in productive hours is.

Many business owners will spend tons of time on things they are comfortable doing. In so many cases, **I see business owners avoiding the things they know will get results**, but that they are not completely comfortable with, and so they make themselves feel better by working harder on things they are comfortable with.

Addressing the reason for the discomfort is critical. Sometimes it is because of a lack of specific knowledge or skills that can be learned. Other times it is based on self-limiting beliefs or fears. In either case, if you are going to be effective, **you need to deal with it and get busy on things that make money for your business**. If you don't, the cycle of working hard on things that don't produce will go on *forever*.

3. **You may have the belief that nobody will do the job up to your standards**, and so you do it all yourself. The key question here, however, is if the work you choose to do is worth your valuable time. As the owner of the business, shouldn't you be working on the most valuable projects and tasks?

There is a great technique, **the skill/value matrix**, for helping you decide where you should put your effort, and for determining what an hour of your highest-value effort is worth. Using this technique, you can decide what you need to move off your plate and



on to someone else's plate, and where you need to improve your business processes and systems so the whole business is more productive.

4. **While it seems like you're generating income, it's not showing up in profit or improved cash flow.** This is a symptom of not understanding where in your business you are making money, and where you are not. Maybe you are not very comfortable with your financials, or maybe you're not even sure what questions to ask.

A great place to start is by **looking at the gross margin you are generating in the different segments of your business.** This could be by project, by customer, by product line, etc., but you simply must know where you are most profitable and why. Sometimes the result of this analysis is that you fire your worst customers! There are also some relatively simple things you can do to get your prices up without losing business.

5. **Sometimes it feels like you are paying your people to watch you do the work.** You're working harder and harder, but the team sure isn't, and they still expect their paychecks.

One of the issues here is that **you know you could train your people to do more of your work, but sometimes it just seems easier to do it yourself.** Or you worry that if you train your team members, they will leave. But guess what? If you don't train them they'll stay!

This kind of thinking will keep you on the treadmill for as long as you own your business. **You have to start looking at training as an investment.** For every hour you put into training, you will not only get hours back for yourself, but you will have multiplied the effort so that your business can get more results. Training is something that pays you back over and over again.

Not sure where to start? Think about what are the things they need to know how to do to be able to get those things off your desk. Then think about how you want them done. Then teach them to do it. Why make it any harder?

6. You may be working hard, but **sometimes you feel like you have no direction.** What are you really working towards? The consequences of a lack of direction are staying on that treadmill, because you aren't really going anywhere specific. There are way too many business owners that have avoided dealing with this for way too many years, only to be shocked when they realize that after all the years of hard work, they haven't really arrived anywhere.

The solution here is simple. You have to **devote time on a regular basis to get really clear about your goals and planning how you are going to reach them.** You should have a disciplined approach to setting your goals, committing to them, writing them down, and sharing them with the people that are going to help you. One thing is for



sure, if you as the “captain of the ship” don’t know where you’re going, no one else will know either.

7. You will put in lots of hours without batting an eye. You believe that if you just keep working hard, it will all turn out for you in the end.

But when it comes to results, are you holding yourself accountable? Or do you just hold yourself accountable for hours worked? This idea goes hand in hand with item 6. **You have to know what results you want before you can be accountable for them.**

Get someone in your life to whom you can be accountable for your results. It can be a spouse, a friend, a colleague, someone from outside your business like a coach, but get someone that requires you to discuss your results with them on a regular basis. This simple idea can make all the difference because it shifts your focus to putting in productive hours, not just hours.

If you find yourself identifying with more than one of these issues, a simple way for you to start to deal with them is to contact Gary Stokes for a free one-hour session on “Getting You Off the Treadmill – Making More Money With More Time for Yourself, Your Family, and Your Friends”. Gary will work with you to identify the resources and strategies to get you going on making lasting changes fast so you can get more out of your business.

How do you claim your free session?

1. Fill in your contact details

Name _____

Business Name _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

2. Circle the item numbers above that you want to talk about
3. Fax these pages to Gary at 443-403-2588, or scan and email them to Gary at garystokes@actioncoach.com. Write “Claiming My Free Session” at the top, on your cover sheet, or in the subject line of your email.
4. Gary will follow up with you to set the date and time for your session.

Gary has a limited number of free sessions available each month, so act fast and claim your session. As an added bonus, everyone that qualifies for a free session will receive a *free one-hour DVD, “The 6 Steps to Building a Better Business”*.

Gary Stokes is a Gold level Coach with ActionCOACH, the World’s Number 1 Business Coaching Company.