

Author of 'Building Your Own Real Estate Practice'

MANOS FINDIKAKIS

CEO and Founder of the Eview Group



eview
GROUP

The surprising truth about
how to achieve success in real estate

THE 60 SECOND ENTREPRENEUR

The surprising truth about how to achieve
success in real estate

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WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

“Franchising has traditionally been built on formulaic uniformity - a model which trades off scope for franchisee entrepreneurship for rigid compliance with prescribed protocols. The Eview Group model is one of the first in the world to challenge conventional thinking by building in a capacity for flexibility on the part of the franchisee within system parameters. It's a revolutionary model and Manos Findikakis's story of its development is a great read.”

Prof. Andrew Terry, Chair of Business Law and Professor of Business Regulation at the University of Sydney Business School and Dr. Cary Di Lernia Lecturer, University of Sydney Business School

“What I love about this book, it is written from the heart and in a simple to understand way (KISS principle). It is raw, it is real, and it will hit home for any aspiring real estate agent and real estate business.

There is no fluff in this book and if you're an entrepreneur and are in real estate this book will truly inspire and ignite you. I have given it to every member of staff in my business....and we don't sell real estate!”

Paul Siderovski, Managing Director SiDCOR Chartered Accountants, BRW Best Places to Work 2013, 2014 and BRW Top 100 Accounting Firm

“Today's Real Estate Talent don't join companies ... they join great cultures. And since 2010 I've had the great fortune of seeing first-hand the benefits of the 'organic culture' that makes the Eview Real Estate Group one of Australasia's fastest

growing Brands. The core values of Eview ensure that recruits will be given every opportunity to achieve their personal best and, whether they stay in the Eview family for a few months or a few decades, they will leave better for the experience. If your current results are not a true reflection of your talent, strengths and business acumen, it's time for you to take "60 seconds" and research the Eview way TODAY!"

Rik Rushton, CEO Insight Development, International Real Estate Coach

"Manos Findikakis is a real estate visionary. His 'Your Brand Your Business' model will turn real estate franchising on its head and has placed Eview at the forefront of the industry"

David Bolton, Chief Operations and Financial Controller, Eview Group Corporate. Certified Practicing Accountant

"I have had the absolute privilege to be involved with Manos Findikakis close to ten years now, both professionally and personally. This extraordinary man is husband, father, and family man first and, in business a visionary, always pushing the boundaries and challenging those around him to reach their goals. What makes Manos happy is genuinely celebrating the success of others, watching, guiding, and participating in their life journey. I wish him all the best for the future and I know from experience it will be worth watching."

Kerri Robertson, Director CEO, My Admin Partner, Melbourne Australia

"Many people have asked me why I would go the effort & expense of rebranding under Eview Group - it comes down to two words: Vision and Integrity.

In our dog eat dog industry it is so extraordinary to meet a couple like Manos & Maria Findikakis. They are a man and woman who ALWAYS hold true to their values & ethics. They have created an exceptional vehicle for Agents & Agencies to build the real estate career & business of THEIR dreams and have established a framework & support system second to none to ensure their success.

I am so proud to be part of this company, this culture, this COMMUNITY, where professional agents support each other and are supported by a World Class entrepreneur to be the best that they can possibly be.

I cannot thank you enough Manos & Maria for including me in your extraordinary World and I cannot wait to see your Vision continue to unfold.”

Julie Ormston, Principal, Eview Group Julie Ormston & Partners, Woodvale, Perth Western Australia, Top 5% Sales Agent

“I have worked in the Real Estate Industry as a Sales Agent for 6.5 years now. Throughout my career as a real estate agent and my previous roles within Financial Services I have never come across an Owner/CEO who is so approachable and just happy to help with anything.

Manos and Maria have given us the opportunity of a lifetime by allowing us to be our own bosses and run our own business and also provide us with the ongoing support and guidance to grow our business, grow our wonderful team, and succeed by achieving some great results.

I would highly recommend anyone wanting to open their own agency to speak with Manos and Maria. I find myself extremely thankful to Manos and Maria and the Eview team for giving us this opportunity of a lifetime.”

Natalie Wells, Principal, Eview Group Aqua Properties, North Lakes, Brisbane Queensland

“Manos Findikakis is a true visionary and one of the nicest humans I know. He not only has brilliant ideas but he executes them with enthusiasm and precision. His way of thinking is revolutionary and he is a special individual who puts the desires of other people ahead of his own. He understands that if he helps enough people achieve their goals that he may be able to fulfil his own.

Manos and his lovely wife Maria are true attraction people that light up a room and make the space a better place to be. You would struggle to find a more generous, intelligent and inspiring person in business and especially within the real estate industry.”

Jarrod Carman, Principal, Eview Group Mornington Peninsula, Mornington, Melbourne Australia. Top 5% Sales Agent

"Manos is a consummate craftsman who inspires people to consistently step up, show up and never give up.

This book is the perfect blend of grit and greatness, where truth meets triumph, a MUST for real estate entrepreneurs who want to leave a legacy that lasts”.

Tanja M Jones, CEO TMJ COACHING, Mindset & Peak Performance Coach

To Maria –

For those now famous words '*Honey, I bought a real estate business.*'

I love you and owe you everything.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Who to thank? How to say it?

Those were my questions when asked to put pen to paper (or should I say fingers to keyboard) for the Acknowledgments Page of this publication. It was interesting to re-read my initial acknowledgements in my first ever book, “Building Your Own Real Estate Practice”. There were many individuals thanked, and looking back, I realise how very and **significantly** impactful all those mentioned were and continue to be.

In our short but exciting journey we have made so many unbelievable connections and formed extremely close friendships with people who continue to inspire and encourage us. Just saying, “Thank you,” is simply not deep enough to express our gratitude to those who have influenced and continue to influence us, both personally and professionally. To all of you (and you know who you are) words cannot express the heartfelt thanks for your past and continuing support.

To our amazing and sometimes crazy Evview Team. From our Franchise Directors, founding members and our most recent inductees, sales, property management, corporate and administration teams; every single one of you. You guys make it so much fun to come to work: thank you for believing in our vision and values and being part of our adventure. We love you guys!

While the only name on the cover of this book is mine, as in all great endeavours in life and business it’s never a one-man show. On documentation, Arthur Proios and David Politakis are referenced as my business partners, yet they are so much

more than that. They are my best friends and represent everything best friends stand for. It has been such a fun journey and I sincerely thank you for always being there.

To my wonderful family: Maria, George and Kosta; there simply is no better 'Why?' You have allowed me to push the boundaries, make mistakes, and then picked me up and dusted me off when I fell.

This is what we signed up for.

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“The best way to
predict the future is
to create it.”

PETER F. DRUCKER

INTRODUCTION

We have all heard the quote "Success is a journey, not a destination." I'm not sure who introduced that statement, but they forgot to mention one thing. They forgot to tell us that 'the journey' was one hell of a rollercoaster ride filled with the highest of highs and the deepest of lows. I've learnt to accept the ride for what it is, knowing that difficulties will always present themselves, but there is no way I would want to get off. I have accepted that to achieve extraordinary things, you have to endure extraordinary challenges along the way.

And for those seeking that elusive 'success formula,' how will you know when you have found it? It all comes back to what we define as 'success'. So before moving into the content of this book, take a moment of quiet thought to articulate what 'success' may LOOK or FEEL like to YOU. To me, a sign of success is when you feel a positive emotional response when you are in pursuit of a worthwhile goal.

As a young adult, I did not understand this concept of success. Influenced by the environment and Western culture, I thought the definition of success was reflected in the accumulation of wealth and things. You know, all the shiny expensive stuff: big houses, boats, expensive cars, and the lifestyle trappings exclusive to the so called 'rich.' Now, I can see how wrong and shallow my interpretation of 'success' really was.

So, what is my current view of 'success'? Let's fast forward 30 plus years and add a lifetime of experiences. It all comes down to just three words: Happy, Choices, and Family. Am I happy

today in my role? Yes I am. Do I choose to do the things I want to do with the most important people in the world, my family? You bet I do. And I sincerely wish this for everyone, for all those who read my story and for those who do not.

This brings me to the title of this book, 'The 60 Second Entrepreneur'. I believe everyone has the ability to be an entrepreneur, but the opportunity can be easily missed. We all have great ideas and good intentions to perform at our best; however, the thing that distinguishes those that will go on to be successful from those who will not is a small measure of time: less than 60 seconds.

It is the 60 second entrepreneurs who manage to achieve success. All of the life changing events we encountered on our journeys happened to be a result of us taking immediate action. It was that one phone call, the booking of that appointment with a valued client... it was acting on the energy rush when that idea came to mind and choosing to share that idea with others then go on to implement it. It was the signing of that document, the one that launched our new business venture. All of these actions took less than a minute. Our greatest wins and achievements are born in less time than it takes to boil an egg.

If you are one of those budding entrepreneurs waiting for the right opportunity it may be time to look beyond your current position, stretch your own goals, and question your existing situation. Seize those precious 60 seconds in each and every day to pick up an idea from within these pages and put them to work to grow your business. We hope you can learn from our

experiences and mistakes and, in doing so, save yourself thousands of dollars, as well as countless days, weeks, months and years of effort and sleepless nights. My hope is that you feel so inspired that you will choose to create a fun and profitable business that will not only offer you security and satisfaction but will also allow you to live an extraordinary life.

“Every great human
victory is a story of
perseverance.”

BRENDON BURCHARD

CHAPTER 1 – WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Kicking and Screaming

My entry into the real estate profession was what most would call unconventional. In fact, I came into it kicking and screaming after losing a bet with my wife Maria. Let me tell you how it happened.

Maria entered the real estate industry as an employed sales agent in September 2001. For two years after that I tried everything in my power to make her quit.

At the time, I was committed (another word for ‘indebted’) to my hospitality franchise, Flakey Jake’s Fish & Chips. Together with my two older brothers and a first cousin, we owned and operated twelve outlets which employed over two hundred 15 to 18-year-old counter staff. I’m sure you can imagine the hormone levels we had to deal with!

Anyway, I had no time to devote to what I considered to be my wife’s ‘pastime’. In frustration, Maria gave me an ultimatum: it was either her and real estate or me and fish and chips on my own.

Of course I put up a fight; a fight which led to a wager of sorts ... a wager I thought I could never lose. Maria was to secure a franchised office in an area already taken by a local real estate franchise group. She was to then find an empty shop in the local shopping strip next to my fast food head office and I would help her with the running of the real estate office. It was

an impossible bet to lose ... or so I thought. What would be the chance of a real estate agency allowing another agency to open in their area? And what would be the likelihood of her finding a vacant shop in one of the most highly sought after shopping strips in the area?

But where there's a will there's a way. Maria made an appointment with the franchisor the very next day. I refused to attend ... I mean it was her dream, not mine, right? Not long afterwards came the phone call that changed everything.

“Honey, I bought a real estate business!”

Those seven words still echo through my head today. I did come into the industry literally ‘kicking and screaming’, but, looking back I have come to realise that losing that bet was in fact the fourth best thing that has ever happened to me: after meeting Maria and having our two wonderful sons, George Jordan and Kosta James.

After the purchase, Maria, in her usual determined manner, knocked on the door of every business owner in the shopping strip. She eventually secured (at a very high price) a 90 square metre maternity shop which she subsequently closed down and refitted as a real estate agency. And the rest, as they say, is history.

60 Second Lesson - Never Give Up:

Where there is a burning desire, you will find a way. There were many ‘60 second’ excuses Maria could have used to let go and forgo her dream ... me being one of them! When you never give up the odds are always with you, not against you.

“The only place
you’ll reach if you
follow the crowd is
the exit.”

ROBIN SHARMA

Starting With Zip!

Most people who know me would consider me to be very conservative and risk averse. I like to plan well in advance and do all the research and numbers to ensure we have the very best chance of success.

From a very young age, Maria and I have owned multiple businesses in a number of industries and the fundamentals are always the same: *If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.* Before commencing a cold start or purchasing an established business always research the industry. Work out who your customers and competitors are, calculate the best estimate and conservative sales revenue and expenses, setup costs, and trading figures. If the numbers look okay on paper then proceed with enthusiasm, but always with caution. There is a lot more to it than that, but in a nutshell, they are the basics you require to make an informed decision on moving forward.

It's funny how things work out. Looking back, our decision (Maria's actually) to open a real estate office was probably one of the craziest ideas and least planned businesses we had ever entered into. We had zero experience in real estate business ownership and absolutely no established past or present sales history in our franchise territory. (Maria's start in real estate sales was in Mt Eliza, Melbourne, and our office was in Frankston East ... two areas with totally different demographics and marketplaces and Maria had less than two years' experience working as an agent's representative in Mt Eliza.)

Under this particular franchise group, our franchise territory had a catchment of 7500 homes and we could not list properties outside those boundaries. We had to refer any potential listings to adjoining offices for a referral fee. We have not followed this philosophy with the Eview Group as we believe that such restrictions inhibit the potential earning capacity of a salesperson and the business they work with. The Eview Group operates under a right to list and a right to sell policy to allow for cross selling and conjunctional sales of listed properties and extends interstate where licensing provisions allow. 'Geographical boundaries' do not apply when trying to build relationships with buyers, sellers, and landlords, nor when it comes to offering our professional services. When you really think about it, in this day and age, we can sell property many kilometres away from our core area. In fact, under Eview, we have a specific award for the furthest sale made from an agent's office: we call it the 'Pluto Award'. It currently stands at 280 kilometres! If it makes economic and logistical sense to help a client then an agent or agency should be able to assist that client with their property needs without restrictions.

But, as luck would have it, there was an absolutely invaluable lesson in this particular franchise rule, one which we continue to use today that has helped us grow our business. We effectively learnt how to dominate and obtain the market share of our franchise area in a very short period of time. When we commenced trading there were 157 'For Sale' boards in the catchment, of which our franchise brand had only one. We changed that to reach a 40% market share in just over 12 months, and at our very best, just over 50% at any one

time. We learnt some valuable lessons and developed a training and prospecting system named 'The Eview High Impact and Wipe-out Program' (This will be discussed in a later chapter).

60 Second Lesson: If you are an established agent planning a move, if at all possible, remain in your current service area. Success is still achievable (as we experienced. However, it's like starting from (almost) scratch when changing areas. The best analogy I can use to explain it is an aeroplane taking off: Most of the energy is used to get it off the runway. Once it reaches its cruising altitude it requires less energy to maintain it at that level. In real estate sales I call this the momentum point.

“I’m always
optimistic I will
reach my
destination;
however, I always
carry a spare tyre
just in case I get a
flat.”

MANOS FINDIKAKIS

Stay Positive, But Travel With a Spare Tyre Just in Case

By nature I'm a very optimistic person. But I'm also cautious, sometimes even a little too cautious. I'm also not a big risk taker ...it's simply not in my DNA makeup. Could we be making more money had we taken more risks? Absolutely! But I have been in situations where conditions totally out of my control had a direct bearing on my family's financial wellbeing and that is something I do not wish to go through again.

I'm what you would call the 'conservative risk taker': the one who always drives with a spare tyre in the boot. I know things will happen from time to time that are either out of my control or as a result of making a wrong decision. In my view, it's better in business to anticipate and be prepared for the occasional breakdown by carrying a spare tyre. In business terms, that translates to having some cash reserves and the ability to implement change quickly in order to minimise any potential damage or financial loss.

Start-up Money and Blowouts

We signed the lease on the premises on the 1st May 2003 and commenced trading in our small office on the 1st July. We were cash poor at the time and used a redraw facility we had on our home loan to fund the project. We budgeted for an office fit-out and a cash flow requirement of \$75,000. That quickly blew out to \$165,000, ouch!

That was our first mistake. As much as I had done some calculated budgeting, real estate was a totally new industry and I should have anticipated significant blow outs to the budget. Our redraw facility was not a large enough sum to start the business and we subsequently had to make arrangements with the bank to borrow a further \$150,000 with a business loan using the remainder of the equity in our home. (We didn't actually have to use the total amount, but having a buffer after the initial blowout was comforting.) It was a tough time, and, as mentioned earlier, my natural business tendency is to be risk averse and very prepared. Had we arranged for a more appropriate line of credit and/or business loan to start with it would have saved us a lot of stress and anxiety.

What Do You Mean the Money is Not Ours?

Now this probably sounds funnier than it actually was. We had made our first sale within two weeks of opening our office. You can imagine the excitement on our faces when Maria brought in the first sales contract and, of course, the initial deposit by cheque. (At this point I must remind you that it was my responsibility to look after the administration and Maria's responsibility to list and sell). She handed over the deposit cheque and I saw this large dollar amount and thought, "You ripper! There's our commission. We can use it to pay some bills."

WRONG! As we all know (I hope), the money needed to be placed in a Statutory Trust Account and couldn't be touched until the early release of the deposit or settlement.

Bugger! Now you need to understand my business mind-set at the time. The concept of making sales and being paid 30, 60, 90, and sometimes 120 days out was totally foreign to any business I had ever been involved in (must be my Greek background!). I came from the hospitality industry, where everything was CASH over the counter.

60 Second Lesson: Always have a redraw facility on your home loan. Use this for unforeseen cash shortfalls or possible opportunities. Avoid the use of credit cards at all costs unless you are disciplined to pay the balance in full BEFORE the interest-free period expires.

“Everything you
want is on the other
side of fear.”

JACK CANFIELD

My First Sale

Before I entered the real estate world with Maria I had had no prior sales experience. I thought I was knowledgeable in the mechanics of running a small family business and worked bloody hard 6–7 days a week, 365 days a year. I had no ‘corporate’ business training, nor did I have a business degree or any association with successful business people that I could learn from.

I was fearful of speaking to people about selling their home let alone trying to convince a buyer to buy one! When Maria first opened her (our) office, we had an agreement that I would handle the mechanics of running the business and would not be involved in listing and selling. (And to make sure it stayed that way, I came to work in very casual clothing ... very casual!)

Of course that all changed approximately six months into our business venture, when a middle aged couple came walking into the office wanting to look at a property we had just listed. It was located a few hundred metres away from our premises. Our receptionist told them no sales agent was in the office to show them through. However, it quickly became evident that these buyers had travelled some distance and were ready to purchase. Fortunately, my receptionist had the foresight to ask (beg was more like it) me, the only other person in the office at the time, to show them the property.

It turns out she knew enough about the property to give me a thorough brief: “It’s vacant, just let them through to take a

look. Don't say anything," she said. After a little more convincing, I reluctantly took the buyers through, resplendent (or so I thought) in my 80s denim suit. Anyway, the property wasn't quite what they were after, but we had another vacant property directly opposite. The receptionist had given me the keys for that property also and they loved it so much they put an offer forward immediately.

They asked the typical question that many buyers ask: "What will the vendor take for it?" Referencing the advertised price on the property brochure, I naturally responded with, "\$219,500." The couple turned to each other, nodded, and said, "Okay, we'll buy it!" It looked like I had natural negotiation skills after all! Remember, I came from a retail environment where you never negotiate on price. The buyers paid full price for the unit and I was no longer a real estate sales virgin. I caught the real estate bug that day and it's been with me ever since.

Of course, as most agents are on their first sale, I was on the highest of highs that night and said to Maria, "Is that how easy it is to sell real estate?" A week later, I put on my first real business suit and entered the real estate profession. From that day on, Maria and I worked as a team, often fighting about who was going to go home to cook dinner and who was going to stay back at the office and catch up on all the work: the latter being the better end of the deal as far as we were both concerned. What a shame I couldn't cook!

Now I don't want to mislead you. While I considered myself to be a successful sales agent it does not mean that I was writing

a million dollars in commission, or carrying 50 listings at any one time. I certainly couldn't claim to be a sales superstar ... far from it, in fact. Maria and I worked as a team. She was the dominant lister (and was brilliant at it) and I predominantly worked as the buyer's agent. Together we carried approximately 20–25 listings at any one time and on average sold 100 properties per year. We were in a demographic where the average sales price was \$220,000 with an average commission of 2.95%. We had a further two sales agents on our team and in the 32 months we operated that office we sold a total of 525 homes. Ours was a high-volume sales business and we worked very hard to make it work and generate a profit.

60 Second Lesson: The greatest gift you can give yourself is that split-second decision to face your fears. Don't hold back, don't procrastinate. Move towards them. As each fear is overcome, confidence builds and self-esteem strengthens. Do not rob yourself of that unbelievable feeling of accomplishment.

“Reality is a sliding door.”

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

CHAPTER 2 – THE EVIEW GROUP STORY

‘Jim’s Test & Tag’: A Sliding Door Moment

It was January 2006 and I was on a weekend Bunnings run to gather some garden supplies. Stopped at a set of traffic lights, I turn to my right and see a ‘Jim’s Test & Tag’ van pull up alongside me. I’m sure many of us have seen them on the road, but this particular occasion was a sliding door moment that would change the course of our real estate career forever. This was the exact moment when I had a crazy thought: to search and find a better way of running a real estate office and a better way for real estate agents to engage with their principals. If the ‘Jim’s Group’ could engage with individuals to have their own business within a business, surely we could do the same in real estate? This was the beginning of an idea which grew into the Eview Group.

You see, up to that point, I was fighting a few internal battles of frustration with the way what I called the ‘traditional’ model of real estate agency was being operated. My frustration was broken into three parts:

1. Retention of staff: Most agents didn’t make it past 12 to 18 months.

2. Financial rewards: Agents were not being remunerated or getting their fair share of commission for each sale
3. Work-life balance: Agents were expected to attend work 9–5, work weekends, and take appointments after hours. They were unnecessarily being burnt out.

Retention of Staff: The ‘Revolving Door Syndrome’

In the two and a half years of running our small office and being part of a local franchise network I saw a continual flow of agents come and go from the network. In fact, I kept a ledger of agents and their performance as provided by the franchisor and at the time there were approximately 90 to 100 selling agents including principals. The top ten agents were always principals (light bulb moment), but the most surprising fact was that out of the non-principal agents who were listed at the beginning of the year, less than 80% were still on the list at the end of the year. To put that in perspective, every 4.5 days there was an agent leaving the network to an opposition agency or leaving the industry altogether. Now that is a very confronting statistic. It's no wonder so many past sellers and buyers never hear from their agent again: they are normally no longer in the industry! (And for the savvy agents reading this, the ‘opportunity’ radar should be on full alert!)

I called this the 'revolving door syndrome'. I also researched outside of our network to see if it was inherent only in ours, but found it to be equally true in others if not worse. So why was this the situation? What made people come and go so readily, and why was the success rate so poor?

I could probably write another book about all the reasons why, but in the interest of brevity, these are my top five reasons why I believe so many agents don't make it:

1. **Easy Start, Easy Quit.** There is a very low entry requirement. That is, the investment of time to obtain your Agent's Certificate is a matter of days, or at most, weeks. If entrants had to study for two or more years their commitment to success would be greater. In my somewhat controversial opinion, every agent should be a fully licensed estate agent. We are dealing with many people's most valuable asset. We have an obligation to ensure that we are committed to excellence in customer service and a highly professional approach in everything we do. You cannot be a solicitor or an accountant without many years of study followed by practical experience. The same should apply to the real estate industry.

There's a saying that a business owner gets the staff he/she deserves. I like to think of it on a broader scale: the real estate industry gets the participants it deserves! Now this is a controversial point and I'm sure I may get some backlash for saying it. The reality is that after three to five days of education, anyone in Victoria

who has a pulse can obtain their agent's representative ticket, find employment with an agency and thereafter go out and represent themselves as being able to sell a consumer's most valuable asset: the family home.

As much as the real estate industry is regulated by state governmental legislation (which, in my view, is a good thing) I do believe that entry to this industry in some states is too easy, hence my reference to getting the professional standard that the industry deserves. Now I'm certainly not going to debate this situation as it is only my opinion, but this is why I believe so many agents struggle to make a true profession from real estate and why real estate agents are not regarded in the same professional light as other professions.

- 2 Can't Handle Rejection.** Yet we are in the rejection business. Many underestimate the tenacity required to stay focussed and energised with setbacks. I will put my hand up in this instance and confess that I struggled with people saying 'no' to me. Had we not made the financial commitment we had to start our business and put everything on the line I might not still be in real estate today. I remember losing one particular listing to the opposition which absolutely gutted me. The phone call came into the office, Maria took the call and I could anticipate where the conversation was going. You know the script: "I appreciate the call and understand your decision. Where did we go wrong? Can we possibly re-appoint? Have you signed?" etc. etc. Maria asked all the right

questions, wished them all the best, hung up the phone, and went to the next call. I, on the other hand, wasn't so relaxed. Drilling into Maria's conversation, I couldn't believe they gave it to someone else. We had done them favours, had sold properties for their family, they were so happy with our services they were *even going to name their kids after us!* (Just joking, but a great Lee Woodward line!). Yep, I confess, I not only took the rest of the day off, but I didn't return to work for another three days! I do look back and laugh and realise how much we have grown. Don't get me wrong, I still don't like to be told, "Sorry, you came in second." I just know how to deal with it more effectively, accept the disappointment for what it is, and move on.

60 Second Lesson: Burn the bridge. Make a definitive decision that you are in real estate for the rest of your life. We are in one of the greatest industries to be in. Focus on the rewards and lifestyle it can provide you and your family with and there will be no turning back. Your mindset following this decision will change everything you do and how you handle every situation.

- 3. Delayed Gratification.** We are an outbound business, not inbound. You need to hunt for business, and most people lack the discipline to hunt. We want results today (that instant fix) but it doesn't work that way. The best example I can give on this is when my twin brother George joined the business. A very coachable individual, he took instruction at face value and

implemented it. One of his first activities was to saturate his service area with the typical marketing drops. He personally delivered 10,000 flyers at which time he made an appointment to come and see me about his prospecting. The meeting went like this: reviewing his results with shoulders drooped, he pointed out that he had personally delivered 10,000 marketing drops with no direct results, i.e. a listing to sell. His question to me was, "What am I doing wrong?" My reply was, "Nothing, George. You're doing everything right; you just need to do another 10,000 drops! A little taken aback George walked out of the meeting. Within four weeks of that meeting he had secured six new listings as a direct result of his continued letterbox drop activities.

It's tough when you first start, but only if you expect immediate results. Think of your first few years as an apprenticeship. It takes on average two to three years before you are recognised in your area and reach what we call the 'momentum point'. This is the point that the tide turns and you start to see inbound calls increase as a result of the relationships you built and the great service you provided in the past.

4. **Looking for the Magic Bullet.** There has never been a greater opportunity for those in real estate to learn from those who have come before them and who are currently succeeding. The amount of free training webinars and videos and the number of extremely affordable seminars and coaching programs available

to everyone in real estate, from what I am aware, is not available in any other industry. Many are in search of the Magic Bullet: those great new scripts and dialogues, marketing drops, or that great big billboard on a main highway. They are so focused on creating the 'right' marketing material that they forget to do one critical thing ... START!

I have been tempted to write a book called 'The Secrets to Financial Success, Weight Loss, and Becoming a Real Estate Superstar.' The challenge is that the book would only be three pages long and would only contain a couple of sentences to reveal each secret. So, let's give it a go ...

Financial Success:

Spend less than you earn. Save at least 10% of your yearly earnings and invest it.

Weight Loss:

Eat less junk food and more of the right foods, exercise three to five times per week.

Real Estate Superstar:

Connect with people who own property and build relationships. 'He who makes the most calls wins!'

I realise it is a very simplistic view of how we can take control in these areas of our lives and there is a little

more to it than that. But is it really that difficult? For some reason, because it's not really that sexy and complicated, many think there must be a catch and continue to search for that one elusive thing that will provide them with a solution no one else has had before.

I remember one time visiting an office with a very high profile performer. We watched this individual punch out prospecting calls in a two-hour session, one straight after the other. Nothing too difficult, just simple touch base calls, no hard selling. In fact, it was quite the opposite. Very short, polite and informative. This individual was a multimillion dollar producer and I had to ask the question: "Out of the remaining 25 or so agents in your firm, how many do what you do daily?" The reply was, "Three!" So I asked, "What do the other 22 do?" And he replied, "Well, they are still looking for the magic bullet!"

60 Second Lesson: Don't try re-inventing the wheel. Yes, as the late Stephen Covey wrote in one of his chapters of his highly acclaimed book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, always sharpen the saw. Keep practicing and reviewing your activities and strive to get better every day. Just don't get busy trying to find the next best thing and let it distract you from actually getting the basics done.

- 5. They Started in the Wrong Office.** Too often I have seen great people with great potential enter our

industry only to be chewed up and spat out at the other end. This sounds harsh, but the sad reality is that many people simply got the wrong start, in the wrong office, with the wrong leader. I am glad to see that this type of entry into real estate is diminishing. The all too common, “Here’s your desk and phone, good luck!” induction process is no longer the norm (or I most certainly like to think so).

If the office environment is not aligned with good values and committed to excellence in customer service and the continual training and development of their people as the core fabric of their DNA, it’s the wrong office to join.

As leaders, we often have more faith in an individual’s potential than they do themselves. There are those who interview well and get past the gatekeeper with huge potential, only to find out that their makeup was simply not suited to real estate and that’s the story they sold to themselves. We feel that it is important to be able to identify this very early on in the interview process or at the very least in the first few months of anyone starting. A leader needs to take responsibility to ensure that even if an individual decides real estate is not for them, they leave knowing that they have had a valuable experience and have learned something. We do not want their real estate experience to negatively impact their confidence, self-esteem, and future endeavours.

“Money is not the most important thing in life; it only comes second to oxygen.”

RITA DAVENPORT

Financial Rewards – It's All About the Money

I have a number of quotes when it comes to money, the following being my favourite:

"We all know that money doesn't make us happy. It's just that we all want to find out for ourselves!"

Hmmm, Is it really all about the money, right or wrong? It just doesn't quite sound politically correct, does it? There have been many studies on what motivates and drives us into action, what satisfies, fulfils, and makes us happy to turn up to work day in and day out, and rarely does money come in at first place. It usually comes in around fourth, with feeling valued and appreciated, doing great work, and having the opportunity to grow and progress preceding money in almost every survey.

I certainly do subscribe to the premise that money shouldn't be the most important factor in your real estate success. What I do find is that money, or should I say the lack of money, is one of the major underlying factors as to why many agents don't make the first 12 to 18 months. Baseline rewards, commission splits, wages, salaries, benefits, and so on need to be substantially adequate and fair to the individual for them to attain success. I don't think anyone would like to go to work (regardless of what the culture or conditions are like) in the knowledge that their counterparts are earning substantially more than they are.

I do place a high importance on the remuneration an agent receives for the effort and results they provide. To this end, I see a lack of transparency within the industry regarding what an agent is entitled to. There are many ways agents can be remunerated: I will focus on the more common form which is a commission split from a sale. You would think it is straight forward, however, I find that many agents are quite confused as to how commission breakdowns are calculated.

I'll detail it as simply as possible. As an example we will use the common practice of 20% for a list and 20% for a sale. That is, if an agent were to list and sell a property, they would be entitled to 40% of the total commission.

Home Sale Price: \$500,000

Agent's Commission: 2.2% inclusive of GST, which equates to \$11,000 agency fees

Total Commission payable to Agency: \$10,000 (after GST)

Based on the example, the agent would be entitled to 40% of \$10,000 = \$4,000

Add the compulsory 9.5% superannuation entitlement (i.e. 9.5% of \$4,000 = \$380), which brings the total entitlement to \$4,380.

So, in actual fact, the agent receives \$4,380 from the \$10,000, which really equates to a list and sell split of 43.8%. Fairly straight forward. The complexity arises when deductions are

made from the commission for office expenses. These may include franchise fees and/or marketing levies.

Revisiting the example: let's say that this agency deducts the common 8.5% franchise fee and a further \$500 marketing levy.

Therefore, total commission to agency:	\$10,000
Less 8.5% franchise fee:	\$850
Less office marketing:	\$500
Balance of commission:	\$8,650

Using the calculation as per the above example:

$40\% \text{ of } \$8650 = \3460 , plus the 9.5% superannuation of $\$328.70 = \$3,788.70$.

So, the agent is not on a 43.8% split, but rather a 37.9% split. This is a significant difference of 5.9%. This represents a reduction of over 13% to the salary of an agent.

What's important here is that both agency and agent are crystal clear on how the net commission figure is calculated and attributed to the agent upon a successful sale. (I have seen even more confusing calculations than these in the marketplace and although I don't profess to be, or put myself out to be, an absolute expert on commission splits if you have any questions or would like any guidance on your current

arrangement drop me an email and I will see if I can shed some light.)

It is also important to note that there are many statutory requirements that, as a minimum, an agent is entitled to receive from personal leave, to holiday leave and car allowance. If you have any concerns or questions with regard to your current employment agreement seek professional advice. It's okay to know what your rights are. The majority of principals I spend time with have an open policy with regard to commissions payable and office splits. And don't be the agent that only considers themselves in the equation. That is, "What's in it for me?" Principals invest large resources of both time, money, and sacrifice to run a business in the hope of a favourable return. They are equally entitled to earn a fair profit for the risks and effort they take. Always seek "win-win" outcomes when reviewing and negotiating commission splits. Whenever I interview agents, a common question I ask them is, "Are you okay with the principal of the business and your colleagues earning a profit?" It's a fairly obvious question and one which most people would think would not need to be asked. Unfortunately, there are many people who have a scarcity mentality and think that for them to get ahead, someone else has to lose. That's a very dangerous mindset and, to avoid it, clear rules of engagement and transparency are key.

Which now brings me to the point of remuneration in general and why I felt disgruntled about the industry. High performers are often paraded at seminars and conferences as writing hundreds, if not millions, of dollars in annual commission.

They are part of the elite and I congratulate them as I know first-hand the effort that is required to achieve such a status. They deserve every accolade and every aspect of their rightful success, and if you are one of those reading this chapter, be humble and very proud of your achievements.

For the majority, however, such lofty goals and achievements are a rare occurrence. Less than 2% of all agents write \$1 million in annual GCI (let alone take it home as profit). The average sales agent in Australia sells less than 24 homes a year and earns approximately \$60K–\$70K in gross salary. Deduct from this the many out-of-pocket expenses an agent personally incurs for vehicle purchase and running costs, phone, personal promotion, etc., and the gross salary diminishes significantly. Of course, it's easy to say "Just go and sell more houses," but we all know it's simply not that easy. The law of supply and demand and competition will always prevail. It's no wonder there is such a turnover of people in the industry.

Then there's the 'Pareto Principle,' more commonly known as the 80/20 rule. This rule applies to so many areas of business and is relevant to owners and managers alike.

Generally speaking:

- 80% of your profits come from 20% of your customers
- 80% of your complaints come from 20% of your customers

- 80% of your profits come from 20% of the time you spend
- 80% of your sales come from 20% of your products
- 80% of your sales are made by 20% of your sales staff

If you were to take a snapshot of the accounting profession for example, you would find that it too would closely follow the Pareto Principle. In fact, every industry and profession would follow a similar pattern. It's just the way things work in business. I'm sure economists have a formula or a theory on why this is true. All I know is that it works this way because of human behaviour.

Hence, the reason why when we created Eview, one of our foremost objectives was to change all that and provide a vehicle that, if worked and applied correctly, could significantly increase the return for each agent and also the principal of an agency. And, of course, I am happy to say that we have done so.

60 Second Lesson: We have developed an online tool 'Agents Commission Calculator' which is available for sales agents to calculate the commission breakdown from each sales transaction. Go to eview.com.au/agentcommissioncalculator or email 60seconds@eview.com.au for more information.

“I don’t think of work as work and play as play. It’s all living.”

RICHARD BRANSON

Work-Life Balance: Is it Possible?

It's a tough gig selling property: working well beyond the regular 38-hour week, with Saturday home opens and, on many an occasion, Sunday appointments. It's never 9-to-5, appointments and activities often go well into the night.

Burnout is a common result of extended hours, stressful situations, unreasonable demands at times from clients and principals ... the list can go on and on. Then, of course, juggling your home life and ensuring your time with family, as it should be, is part of your scheduled week's activities.

Work-life balance sounds great in theory, but it can be very difficult to achieve. Or is it so difficult? This was my third difficulty with the real estate agent's life. When I looked at the activities, there was no logic to 9 to 5 scheduling of appointments and work hours and, quite frankly, when reviewing the actual face-to-face vendor and buyer activities an agent had to make with clients, apart from Saturday home opens, it rarely amounted to more than 10–15 hours per week. So it absolutely baffled me why agents were actually working so many hours and why principals continued to run with a business model that was created over 50 years ago and hadn't evolved with the technology of the modern business world.

Just because an agent turns up to work daily, doesn't mean that the agent actually achieves anything! If you are not in front of a buyer or vendor why do you have to be at the office? ... simply to show your principal that you are 'working'?

Let's cut to the chase. When you analyse the weekly activities of most agents, I would suggest that many of them are seriously wasting 50% of their time (if not more) and are doing busy-work rather than dollar-productive work.

60 Second Lesson: Just for one week diarise every activity and appointment you do which relates to work. Categorise those activities into three sections: The first section being activities that did not require speaking with a buyer, vendor or potential vendor, e.g. compiling a CMA, delivering a pre-list kit, attending a photo shoot or building inspection, or doing letterbox drops. In the second section, itemise all the activities which were either face-to-face with a buyer, vendor, or potential vendor (include VIP and/or Raving Fans in this category) and/or on the phone to them. In both sections, next to each activity, write down the amount of time spent on each. For the third section, itemise all the 'training and self-development' activities you complete. These may include podcasts, YouTube videos and reading self-help books.

At the end of the week, simply add up each category and the totals will give you a clear indication of what productive activity you are doing and what non-productive activity you are doing. Do this exercise and I promise you it will be a real eye-opener!

Now the Challenge ...

There were three major areas of the real estate industry I thought could be done better. We needed to stop the revolving door of agents coming and going, make the financial rewards to agents more attractive without them having to sell more homes, and provide a working environment with as much support as possible to provide them with the best opportunity to achieve their goals and have an amazing work life balance. The challenge was in front of us and an idea had just been born. So what happened next?

“Those who are
crazy enough to
think they can
change the world
usually do.”

STEVE JOBS

CHAPTER 3 – ‘CRAZY’ IS THE NEW BLACK

The Birth of the Eview Group

Now it was my turn to drop a bombshell on Maria. Whilst finishing my Bunnings shopping my mind was running a hundred miles an hour with ideas and thoughts. A seed had been planted that somehow we could get agents to run a business within a business and be able to solve the three biggest challenges I saw the real estate industry as having:

Stop the revolving door of agents,
Fairer split of commissions, and
Work-life balance.

The adrenaline rush whilst in Bunnings was like nothing I had experienced before. Once the shopping was completed, I went straight home to share my light bulb moment with Maria. One look at me and Maria instantly knew that something wasn't quite right. And then I started: "Honey, I've got this crazy idea!"

There was no denying it. Maria knew I was serious. I didn't know what it would look like or how it would work. All I knew was that designing a business for agents to have a, 'business within a business' and be, 'in business for themselves but not by themselves' was the future of real estate. Now, just to rewind a little, the idea of, 'You're in business for yourself,' 'This is your business,' and 'You Inc.' was not new in real

estate. It was the most common theme and discussion in every training event we attended, internal or external. “Treat your sales business as your own,” “How hard you work will determine how much reward you get,” ... we’ve all heard the spiel. And for all intents and purposes, it is true.

There was only one missing piece. All agents were still being treated and engaged as employees, not as business owners. And that was all about to change.

Maria bought into the business idea instantly. We made a decision that night to sell our current office and take a year off to plan our new business model. You read correctly: we literally made a ‘60 second’ decision to put our office on the market and take an extended leave to work on our new business idea. Our office was sold within 24 hours and within four weeks we were on what has now been made famous by Tim Ferris in the *‘Four-Hour Work Week’* a mini retirement year.

The next ten months were filled with extensive business meetings, financial modelling, and business planning. There was also the opportunity to travel to Europe for three months where our research continued to see how real estate was sold in other parts of the world. During this time we shared our idea with two of our closest friends, Arthur Proios and David Politakis, who also embraced our vision (I think they simply saw the excitement and energy we had around it and wanted to be a part of it to be truthful: it really was a crazy idea at the time) and became equal business partners.

Together, the four of us planned and developed the early model of what was then known as 'Eview Real Estate Partners'. We launched our new agency on the 20th November 2006. There were just the four of us and one receptionist in a building with over 500 m² of floor space!

When we first moved in we used to call out to each other, and all we heard was an echo. We even played cricket with a pitch – stumps and all!

I recall on our very first day walking into the adjacent coffee shop and greeting the general manager of the number one real estate office in the area. He held out his hand to shake mine and said, "I've met some very brave people in real estate, but you would have to be the bravest." Now I'm not sure if I should have taken that comment as a compliment or a threat. All I know is that we were fully immersed in our belief in our vision. We were running on adrenalin and the feeling of controlling our own destiny squashed any thoughts, or fear, of failure.

We later called the energy around our office launch 'start-up energy' because truthfully that's what we believe was critical to our success. It wasn't our branding (looking back it was quite horrid!): we were very amateurish when it came to style guides and building a good looking brand. But, you know what? It really didn't matter. Sellers don't buy brands, they buy people.

60 Second Lesson: Sometimes a door opens and you know you should walk through it, but it is the most frightening and

paralysing experience. At this point, you may be tempted to share your idea with a family member or colleague in the hope that they will see the same opportunity as you do and be as excited as you are, and encourage you in your plans. But what happens if they don't? What do you do then? This actually happened to us. I shared my idea with a colleague who had many more years' experience in real estate than both Maria and I had, and the response was crushing (for a split second!) We were actually told that it wouldn't work, there was no money in it, and it was a huge risk. When I was told that, I knew in that instant that the risk wasn't in moving forward with the idea, the risk was not moving forward. Don't ask me why, I just knew his advice was wrong and that the idea was sound. On reflection, I had sought advice from someone I deeply respected, but who was not qualified, or in a position of knowledge and experience to give an informed and constructive response.

“You have to learn the rules of the game; and then you have to play better than anyone else.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Starting From Scratch ... Again!

The many lessons we learnt from our first business were applied to the Evview business.

Firstly, we wanted to be debt-free. We had all saved our initial start-up capital in the lead up to the opening. We did a lot of the office fit-out ourselves. It was professional in every aspect but not over the top. We used sweat equity where we could and we were determined to commence and stay debt-free. We had all saved enough and had access to funds to allow for personal living expenses for six months.

We kept our fixed monthly overheads to an absolute minimum and were frugal in every aspect of our business. Our drafted business plan allowed for drawings to commence six months into the business, ensuring we had built up a huge cash supply so that we didn't have to rely on overdraft facilities or any other form of loans. We achieved that and more.

Our recruitment was slow at first, as our model was so new and different in our marketplace. Most people were very wary. We invested heavily in advertising which really didn't produce any great results on the recruitment front. And all the while, all four of us were working crazy hours listing and selling property. I think even we were surprised with the traction we had in the marketplace from an absolute cold start. Again, we took the lessons we had learned from our previous agency and simply replicated that system.

The exciting aspect was that as we were getting greater market share in the areas we were working, more agents were also attracted to the team. Boards not only attract more boards, as we all know, they also attract agents to you. It was getting exciting.

If You're Not Getting Tomatoes Thrown at You, You're Not Doing Enough

That is an old Amway saying and how true it is! (Amway was a highly successful multilevel marketing business that was very popular in the 80s and which we were a part of for a short period. We didn't achieve great results, but we learned a hell of a lot about business.) We were getting tomatoes thrown at us from all directions and from all the competitors, but we were oblivious to the hits. We were so busy watering our own garden we had no time to worry about what our neighbours were doing. We didn't respond to their antics and simply kept our noses clean, bums up, and heads down.

Real estate is a very ego-driven business which, quite frankly, is the part of our industry I least like. I get that we are competitors and there is no prize money when you come second in a listing. The harsh reality is that every industry is extremely competitive, and if it's not now it will be soon. It's the way the market is. Have a mentality of abundance and don't go out of your way to bag the agency across the road. Exercise and practice healthy competition. If you study and analyse the numbers, you only require a small part of the

market to actually achieve high personal success. There is enough for everyone who does the right thing and provides great customer service. Focus on that, and simply duck when a tomato is thrown at you.

“Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to lie in the world they’ve been given than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact. It’s an opinion. Impossible is a declaration. It’s a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary. Impossible is nothing.”

NIKE

An Eview Group Franchise in Every Postcode

The weeks rolled into months and the months into quarters. Before we knew it, 12 months had passed.

In our first seven months of trading we generated over \$750,000 in GCI, and in our first financial year we achieved \$2.7 million. The most exciting thing was that our agents were loving the system and model.

They loved the ability to earn more of the sales transaction and have total freedom in doing so. We supported every aspect of their business and we treated them as our VIP clients.

We commenced a property management division in December 2008 by purchasing under vendor terms a distressed portfolio of 300 properties which we organically grew to 1000 in five years. We achieved an annual sales revenue of \$5 million in the 2009–10 financial year and have hovered at that figure every financial year since. We were nominated in the Top 50 Sales Offices in 2013, in the first-ever REB Online Australian Awards, and have achieved that status every year since. It took just over nine years to sell our 5,000th property from our founding office. As our team grew so did our premises: from 500 m² of floor space to over 1000 m² on three levels ... a massive achievement by anyone's standard and a very proud moment for all the team. And it feels like we have only just gotten started!

Now, our aim is not to be the fastest growing or biggest real estate network in Australia. We want to be known as the most exciting real estate group in Australia because that's what we feel we are. Our big, hairy, audacious goal is to have an Eview Group franchisee in every postcode of Australia. Our personal mission is *"To inspire and help others create fun and profitable businesses so that they can live an extraordinary life."*

Zig When the Competition Zags

When we first commenced Eview, I used to describe it as the make, model, and colour vehicle our agents drive. We are the pit crew who make sure it is finely tuned and that it has all the bells and whistles as well as a V8 motor. We train the drivers to drive it as fast as they want, forward, left, and right ... so long as they don't drive it backward!

Our branding reflected the analogy of the model quite well as most of the major networks do, but I always felt something was missing. Something just wasn't quite right. I could see challenges appearing in our now-expanded model with multiple offices. We were looking and feeling more like the traditional model and that just didn't sit well with me. I always want to be zigging when the competition is zagging. It was time for a change, but what change?

“The first step
before anybody else
in the world believes
it is that you believe
it.”

WILL SMITH

An Australian First: Your Brand, Your Business. ‘YBYB’

It was March 2014 when the light bulb moment came. Sitting in bed reflecting on the week’s travels interstate to various conferences, and meetings with new start-ups, a thought came to mind. What if we allowed each new office or agent to have its own brand, backed by the Eview Group? Another crazy idea? By now, I’m sure you realise I LOVE crazy ideas!

So, Maria once more saw that excited but nervous look in my eyes. It was seriously 1 am in the morning, and yes, I did wake her up! We spoke of the idea. She had a huge smile on her face and I knew once again that we were in for another ride!

The next day was Sunday and we called an urgent meeting with David and Arthur to share my thoughts on a possible new direction for Eview. Once more the two of them saw how excited we were. What’s more, we all saw an opportunity and a gap in the market that we could fill and provide further value to our franchisees and agents to build their own unique brand and business and achieve an even greater market share. To say we were excited would be an understatement.

Our planning for the proposed new model commenced the following week. Again, we pooled all our resources and created business plans that not only looked at numbers but, more importantly, at human resources. If we were going to do this, we were going to need help.

So, in a matter of months we changed the analogy of our model to not only providing the make, and model of car, with all the bells and whistles and the pit crew to keep it finely tuned. We were now also training the drivers to drive the car the way they wanted and choose their very own colour with the added ability to personalise the number plate! We called the model 'Your Brand, Your Business,' or 'YBYB.' (Internally, we affectionately call the model 'The Jelly Bean Model'... it sounds more fun!)

We hand-picked members for our new corporate team and engaged with the best designers to recreate a new look and feel for the Eview Group.

Coincidentally, what we didn't know at the time was that we were the first to launch a new business model which two Sydney University lecturers, Andrew Terry and Cary Di Lernia, had written about and published in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Their article* was published after they studied and researched business and market trends locally and internationally. They wrote:

"There is a growing dissatisfaction from Gen X and Gen Y of the 'McDonaldisation' of so many aspects of consumer life. They're searching for something more than the tired old cookie-cutter experience most franchises provide. Meanwhile, people who head into franchise ownership with an entrepreneurial dream are getting increasingly frustrated that it's impossible to put their own stamp on the business. In recent years, more and more franchisee owners, across a

range of chains, have sought greater autonomy from headquarters."

(* If you would like a copy of the article, please email 60seconds@eview.com.au.)

That is a short extract of the article, and we had the pleasure in December 2015 to have Andrew and Cary visit our headquarters and take them on a tour of Eview HQ. They were a wealth of information and encouragement. Having researched changing and emerging business trends, they coined the term 'quasi-franchising', which is how we now describe the Eview model. It was the first of its kind in any industry in Australia. How exciting is that!

60 Second Lesson: You can imagine the amount of personal opinions we received (some requested and many unsolicited!) on the new look Eview Group. If we thought we had a field of tomatoes thrown at us before, we had an avalanche this time round. Even more reason for me to know this was going to work. Drown out the naysayers, protect yourself from negativity, welcome constructive feedback and suggestions, but always be sure you filter the place they are coming from.

“Business as usual
no longer applies. It
actually never has.”

MANOS FINDIKAKIS

We All Have the Same Ingredients: It's How You Put Them Together that Makes the Difference

I'm absolutely fascinated by this industry for more reasons than one. On the surface, we all appear the same: we drive similar cars and wear similar suits; we all have access to the exact same ingredients as every competitor down the road and, for that matter, any part of the country.

So what makes us different?

What is your point of difference?

Why should anyone choose you over the next agent?

Why should I join your company?

Ever been asked that? Have you been stumped to know how to confidently articulate your difference in a 10-second elevator pitch? From real-life interviews, I can tell you that most people stumble. They seriously have to put on their thinking hat before they answer. It's already too late then.

I heard at a seminar one time (I believe it was one of the many John McGrath sessions I've attended) that we all have the same ingredients: it's just how we put them together that makes the difference. How very true that statement is. Your compelling difference needs to come from within. Sure you can demonstrate recent sales activities and provide great

information and advice but, if it doesn't come from a good place within, the passion, energy, confidence, and enthusiasm will not shine through.

That is not to say that you don't have an edge in a marketing package or some form of negotiation technique over your competition. It could be that you promote yourself as a boutique agency with an exemplary record of customer service, or part of a much larger organisation, and are able to demonstrate the benefits that provides to the seller such as a greater scope to reach more buyers. Whatever it is, it doesn't matter. You just need to say and display it with a ton of enthusiasm, passion, and, most importantly, belief.

As for ourselves, when we are looking to attract more agencies to join our network, our message is very simple: We are seriously Australia's most exciting real estate group that offers the opportunity to business owners to create or retain their very own brand and help them build a fun and profitable business so that they can live an extraordinary life.

60 Second Lesson: Deliver your pitch with absolute conviction and passion; believe you are the best, and they will believe you believe that you are the best. That will be your winning formula that no one can replicate.

Opportunity + Obstacles = Bugger!

I should stand corrected with the above sub-heading but I wanted to grab your attention as I feel it's probably the most

important part of the book. Well to me it feels like it is, as this is what got us here in the first place.

The formula should read: Opportunity + Obstacles = Growth. I added 'bugger' instead of 'growth' because that's how I believe most people feel when faced with a challenge or obstacle (at least I'm honest enough to admit it!).

Don't we all wish that moving towards our goals, or working on an idea, or working in our business was always smooth sailing? Don't you wish that once you make a decision to build a business and formulate a business plan, that once you get started, everything goes like clockwork?

I mean seriously, who wants to face and overcome obstacles, face challenges, deal with total f*%# ups, and, of course, deal with difficult people, just to get told, "You will grow from this"? No one does! And that's where 'bugger' comes into it. (I'm pretty sure most people use a more descriptive word or sentence instead of bugger, but I'll leave that to your imagination.)

Now let's re-arrange the formula:

Opportunity + (Obstacles + Bugger) = Growth

The truth of the matter is

- You will face obstacles
- You will make mistakes and lose money
- You will be ridiculed
- You will have the fear of failure
- You will doubt yourself

You will have people let you down
You will lose a listing
Your will have a vendor say no to a great offer
You will have a buyer pull out of a deal
Etc., etc., etc.!

The list is by no means complete nor is it there to frighten you off. It simply is a reality check and the absolute truth is that, without question, every single person who walks through the door of opportunity will face obstacles and challenges: some similar, some greater, and some seemingly impossible. All will grow from the experience one way or another should they choose to.

So just to recap: that has been our Eview journey to date. It was an idea that started in the driver's seat of a car on the way to doing what millions of other people have done ... shopping at a Bunning's store.

Lucky there was a red traffic light!

60 Second Lesson: Let the door of opportunity be open in your mind every minute of every day. You don't have to walk through every door, that's not the point. But one day, that blinding flash of the obvious may just appear and set you on a magical journey of discovery, as it has for us.

“The definition of insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

CHAPTER 4 – THE SURPRISING TRUTH OF WHO MAKES IT IN REAL ESTATE

Real Estate is Simple; It's Just Not Easy

Real estate is very simple. In fact, extremely simple. *It's just not easy.*

What I mean by that is that the process of sales is easily taught. Unlike a solicitor or an accountant it doesn't require an extensive level of education or years in college to gain a degree to practice. In just a few short days one can obtain their agent's representative certificate to gain eligibility to be employed under the supervision of a Licensed Estate Agent and within days of commencing be responsible for the sale of the most valuable asset that a person may own: their home!

More home truths. How is it that a rookie can come into the marketplace, smash out prospecting activities which lead to appraisals, compete in the lounge rooms of sellers, be up against agents in the area with many more years experience and success stories, even come up against seasoned directors, and win the trust of the sellers above the established agents?

What other industry provides the opportunity for that to occur? None that I know of. And that's where the secret lies ... DNA!

What's Your DNA?

What does it take and who makes it in real estate? With over a decade of personal, hands-on observation and research I have found that it always boils down to one simple thing: their DNA. No magic stuff: they either have it or they don't. Some people are born to be good at selling and leading people, they can do it with a natural ease. Others have to work a little harder. Both can be equally successful with the right DNA.

Currently, there are approximately 50,000 real estate professionals in our industry. The harsh truth is that 80% of those entering our industry today will have changed their career and or workplace within the next 12 to 24 months. As mentioned earlier, I call that the revolving door syndrome and it is a real black mark against our industry.

This leads me back to the DNA principle. I have learned that the most important characteristics required to be a successful salesperson and real estate business owner fall into three categories:

1. Attitude
2. Ambition
3. Accountability.

Attitude: Not This One Again!

We've all heard it and are probably over it!

Let's get straight to the point, it's not only my opinion, having the right attitude is the most important element of all three DNAs.

I've never been to any seminar or picked up any self-help book and not noticed 'positive attitude' referenced in some shape or form. Do you have the right attitude that will allow you to stretch yourself and venture beyond your comfort zone? Have you got the right attitude to dust yourself off and pick yourself up when you fall?

Let me cut to the chase. Get your attitude right and you're 90% there. If you don't have the right attitude or *aren't prepared to develop* a great attitude, then don't even bother reading the rest of this book. I'm sorry to be so blunt, but that's how vital having the right attitude is to making it in this business.

So what is a positive attitude? I searched on Google for what I thought were the best definitions:

A good definition of 'positive attitude' will emphasise being: *affirmative and certain, without being overconfident or intolerant.*

The simple definition is: *the way you dedicate yourself to the way you think*. Interestingly, this is also the definition of a negative attitude.

A more complex definition is: *how you choose to dedicate yourself to the way you think, how you choose to dedicate yourself to being positive, and how you choose to dedicate yourself to reacting in a positive way*. And your choice must be consistent.

And the best way you can tell what type of attitude you have is how you react when things go *wrong*! (And I acknowledge I often find myself working on this one!)

60 Second Lesson: Your attitude will send you in either a positive or negative direction, but it will always be your choice.

Ambition: Definition

“A strong desire to do or to achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work.”

In my book, it's the alpha and the omega – the beginning and the end! If you don't have it, you won't achieve anything. This is all about dreams and goals. This is about an eagerness or motivation to do or achieve something that's worthwhile.

Despite the clichés that make the word ‘ambition’ the driving force behind dreams and goals, ambition is the one trait that sets apart those who achieve something great from those who merely subsist. In a world full of ‘just get the job done,’ one’s level of ambition is the impetus that leads some to reach for a higher and greater purpose.

I have read many books on goal setting and dreams and have realised that very few people actually establish clearly defined goals. Does that mean you need to articulate your goals in writing and put it up on the fridge as a daily reminder? Probably not. However, in my observations, the most successful people have one thing in common: they are very clear on their goals and ambitions and, in most cases, have them written down. I personally choose to follow their lead and write my goals down.

To some, being ambitious and setting goals comes naturally, while to others it seems to be an overwhelming task. I think that those who see it as an overwhelming task believe that goals need to be detailed and complicated. But in actual fact, nothing could be further from the truth. In reality, the simpler the goal the more likely it will be achieved.

If you read the autobiographies of the wealthiest people in the world, few, if any, started out with a goal to be a multi-millionaire or billionaire. In most cases, their goals were modest and quite realistic. Usually, they were trying to make enough money to pay the bills and support the family. What led them to achieve incredible success was the unstoppable momentum created in their quest to achieve their initial

modest goals. More often than not it is the act of pursuing simple goals that catapulted them into the realm of the super-wealthy and successful.

There is another way to define ambition when it comes to real estate, which is more a state-of-mind than an actual motivating driver. That is, are you in a mode of 'comfort', 'hungry', or 'starving'?

If you are too comfortable in real estate the desire and burn to achieve more may not be present. Remembering this is an outbound business, not inbound, we need the motivation attached to self-discipline to help drive our daily activities.

If you are in 'starvation' mode, you may also be in desperation mode. This is quite a dangerous position to be in and is sometimes referred to as 'commission breath.' You are so desperate and self-centred to make the sale for personal financial gain that your ambition is driven by negative drivers which will stifle your success.

This leaves the 'hungry' mode, the healthiest of the three mentioned for success in real estate. Being hungry means you have the drive to create results in pursuit of your desired goals and ambitions and a special energy that gets you moving and taking action.

Accountable: Sometimes You Just Need a Tap on the Shoulder

Accountable is defined in the dictionary as “the state of being responsible, liable or answerable for one’s conduct or performance.”

So who are you accountable to? The answer is *you*. No one else is responsible for where you are today other than you and the decisions you have made to date. Your degree of accountability therefore, is just as important a factor in your success as your attitude.

Accountability is the process by which you keep yourself on track and work towards your goals. Some have the ability to measure themselves whilst others have what I call ‘accountability buddies’.

At the 2011 AREC conference, Maria and I had the great privilege of being seated next to the famous Bob Bohlem and Lilian Montano. What an inspirational couple! They attribute all their success to accountability and the constant monitoring of activities and results. To that end, they have monthly coaching programs specifically designed around accountability. As part of their coaching program, they conduct weekly conference calls with their students who submit weekly activity sheets. Should the students fall behind on their weekly targets they have self-imposed penalties with which they must comply.

So accountability is a key component of your career success. What penalty will you impose on yourself should you not complete your activities? As an example, one of Bob and Lillian's students agreed that should they not reach their target within a certain time frame they would write a cheque to the value of \$5,000 and give it to their direct competitor. Now if that didn't motivate them to succeed, I don't know what would!

You may not need to go to those lengths (although I must admit it would get some people moving) to keep you on track. The easiest and quickest way is to have an accountability buddy ... from within your office or outside of it.

60 Second Lesson: Another simple trick, and one which I have used personally, is the daily SMS to your accountability buddy. When I was on a particular health and fitness goal and training twice a day, I had to submit my daily activity and results to date via SMS to my life coach. It had the desired effect of keeping me on track and accountable to my desired goal.

What Can a Business Card and a Cup of Coffee Do For You?

You know the saying, "It's not what you know but who you know that counts." Do you believe this is true? How approachable are you? Do you take a genuine interest in other

people? Do you allow people to spend time with you? How does this aspect of your DNA work for you?

Your ability to allow people into your personal and business life is paramount to your success in real estate because this business revolves around people. To me this is all about your ability to interact with others whether you like them or not! Let's be honest, we all know people we would rather not work or socialise with. Many people take a "What's in it for me?" attitude when dealing with others. To me, that is a dangerous attitude to adopt. I've always believed that success comes when you help others first. I believe this is one of my own key strengths. I genuinely take an interest in other people and am always very approachable. In fact, I am fascinated by what makes other people tick.

60 Second Lesson: One of my favourite sayings is, '*What can a cup of coffee and a business card do for you?*' More than anything else, inviting someone out for a cup of coffee to share ideas would probably rate as one of the most important activities of any business leader. It's amazing what a great return on investment this simple activity can bring. Make it part of your business plan to meet with someone you can share ideas with on a monthly basis. Don't wait to finish the book. Pull out the phone now and book the appointment.

Learn From Your Mistakes

They say you learn more from your mistakes than you do from the things that go well. But while this may be true,

making mistakes can cost you dearly ... sometimes even tens of thousands of dollars. And believe me, **you will make mistakes!** It is not a matter of 'if' but rather, 'when'.

I have yet to meet a successful businessperson who has not made a bad financial decision, trusted an individual in a contractual arrangement which ended up being unethical, or simply misjudged the timing of a business activity, resulting in a loss.

As a business owner you will face a myriad of challenges, including financial loss when employees make mistakes for which you are ultimately responsible, or at times when they under-perform. In other words, when you're at the top, the buck stops with you.

It is important to see these losses in perspective. Yes, losses are losses: it's about money you had the potential to earn but didn't. If I had a crystal ball and told you that in the next five years you would build a business that would return a profit in the fifth and subsequent years of \$500k dollars a year, would it be worth the risk if you also discovered through the crystal ball that your mistakes during this time would cost you \$200,000? Of course it would be! It just doesn't seem like it at the time you make the losses. It is important to focus on the end goal and the return on investment of both your time and money.

So, before you proceed with anything identify your personal stress level in terms of financial risk. Some people handle it well while others don't handle the stress well at all, which

negatively affects their performance and results. I cannot stress (pardon the pun) how critical this is to you as a salesperson and business owner. If you allow stress to affect your performance, it will have a snowball effect on your financial position.

He Who Makes the Most Calls Wins

I see many agents and agencies that are in search of the magic bullet when it comes to generating leads for business. There is no magic bullet. *"He who makes the most calls wins."* Period.

You can send out as many direct mail flyers, SMSs to our database, email newsletters and reports, and plaster every billboard in your service area with your mug shot; but nothing, and I mean nothing, will beat an agent who is not afraid of the phone. And I use the word 'afraid' because out of all the prospecting activities available to an agent, this is the most powerful and provides the best return on investment in both time and money (it actually shouldn't cost you any money), yet it is the most neglected next to door knocking.

One of Australia's highest performing agents, James Tostevin, claims his outstanding success is as a direct result of his unwavering discipline to consistently make prospecting calls ... hundreds of them on a weekly basis. They are all to warm clients he has met or helped in the past. He loves it!

Another \$1.5 million dollar-plus agent who consistently sells 120 to 150 homes per year also executes the same disciplined

habit. The majority of his calls, however, are made to cold clients: that is, homeowners whom he has never met, and whose numbers are not registered on the 'do not call' register. His is a great story. He was telling us at an office visit that he tried to develop various scripts and dialogues to use when connecting with homeowners. He found that no matter what script he tried, it just wasn't working for him. He found himself going off on various tangents and not getting to the point; he just wasn't comfortable making scripted calls. So after a coaching session with his mentor, it was decided that the dialogue would be changed to ... wait for it ...

"Hi, this is Agent X from XYZ Realty. I'm calling local homeowners to see if they would like a complimentary appraisal of their home."

And that was it. They either said, "Yes," and would follow up with an appraisal booking, or "No," in which case he would always send a thank you card. He said by changing his strategy, he was able to complete more calls in every session, didn't have to think to try and make conversation, and the end result was generating face-to-face appointments with homeowners who would possibly consider going to market at a later stage. It's not that complicated.

All the top performing agents in our network also possess this tattooed habit. It is a common trait in all high performers including those outside our industry.

We all know we have to keep in touch. But knowing what to do and actually doing it are at two totally different ends of the

spectrum. So why do most agents avoid it? Rejection and feeling uncomfortable: they feel they are intruding (and to some extent they are if their call has no purpose), and are simply fearful and embarrassed by the whole process. Very few break this fear.

These are my three suggested ways to have this **non-negotiable** activity completed:

1. Schedule the appointment in your diary, buddy up with fellow colleagues to keep each other accountable, and as the NIKE tag line suggests, JUST DO IT!
2. Employ the services of someone who is willing to perform the duty or, if you're a business owner, employ a full-time dedicated professional telemarketer in-house and share with the team.
3. Totally outsource the calls to a professional telemarketing company. Interview a number of agencies and engage them on a trial basis. Supply various scripts and targeted prospecting, and make sure you role-play with the firm before commencing. (A large majority of our team select this option and if you email me, I'd be happy to share the companies' contact details with you. They cover the whole of Australia.)

Making 'Warm' Calls

I define 'warm' calls as people you have met, who know of you, but don't necessarily have a close connection. That is, there's a minor relationship between you but you may feel that your calls could be perceived as annoying by them. When making these types of 'warm' calls, can I suggest you make them between 9 am and 12 pm. This is the time that most people will be at work so, if you're calling the home number, you will most likely get their home answering service and if you call their mobile, you will most likely get their message service. Now this strategy may sound a little counterproductive, but let's step back and think about it.

If you were on the receiving end of a phone call from a real estate agent what would your first impression be before answering? You would probably think, like most, that they are going to ask you if you're thinking of selling. Right? And the likelihood of that call occurring right at the time you're thinking of selling is probably 1 in 300, statistically speaking. So there is a good possibility that if you do connect with them the call may be perceived, through no fault of your own, as annoying, even if you want to share valuable information like how you sold the home down the street for a record price!

On the flipside, should you catch their message service and leave a short, straight-to-the-point message, you have achieved a number of positive outcomes. Firstly, you didn't annoy them. Secondly, you left them a short message that they will play back and listen to in its entirety. They would clearly hear your whole message about the great sale you

achieved, or congratulating them on a yearly property anniversary, or whatever message you feel is relevant at the time. More importantly, they won't be able to say to you "Sorry this is not a good time to talk," and hang up, and how often has that happened and how has that made you feel?

60 Second Lesson: I totally get the resistance to consistent cold and warm calls. There is absolutely no glamour in it. If you are simply avoiding the activity, make the investment and outsource it TODAY. It will instantly relieve you of all guilt, and the financial investment is minimal for the results it will produce. And you will never have to cold call again!

“Your greatest competitive advantage is that your competition is lazy; so long as your competition can’t say the same thing about you.”

MANOS FINDIKAKIS

Your Ultimate Competitive Advantage

Your greatest competitive advantage is that your competition is lazy; so long as your competition can't say the same thing about you!

This statement is true as long as you differentiate yourself from your competitors. If you and your competition are doing exactly the same thing then there is no differential, at least in the eyes of the public. But, if the public can see that you work harder and smarter than your competition, then your competitors' laziness absolutely becomes your greatest competitive advantage.

If a competitor is good at what they do, is proactive, and works hard to achieve a great result for the client, then this too can serve as an advantage for you. Why? Because it will force you to lift your game. We were living proof of this in our marketplace. Our strongest competitor had a significant market share when we arrived on the scene but, just like the new rookie in an office, we were hungry (and more hungry than they were). They dropped their guard and within a very short period of time we became the dominant threat in an area worked by more than 150 sales agents.

Today, our combined market share of the leading agencies in our marketplace is well over the 50% mark, despite the fact that we are surrounded by 20-plus standalone offices all situated within a 200-metre radius of one another! But guess what, we were the best thing that ever happened to them

because they now achieve more sales than they ever had, and probably ever would have.

I am an advocate of the 'more the more' theory for those that want it. Abundance in business and in life is everywhere. As a result of this belief, I am not fearful of my competition; in fact, I embrace it. Do I get upset when we lose out in the field? Absolutely! I'm as competitive as the next bloke. But what I do know is that competition makes you work harder and achieve more. Anyone that chooses to ignore strong competition will get left behind.

“Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it. He who doesn't, pays it.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

CHAPTER 5 – NUMBERS HELP US PREDICT THE FUTURE

Excel Spreadsheets and the Family Joke

At work and at home, I'm known as the Excel spreadsheet guy. Now I'm certainly no expert at working with Microsoft Excel, but I'm often using spreadsheets to help with our business planning and modelling. I spend many hours in front of a computer plugging figures into Excel worksheets and creating formulas to help with projected sales and growth plans.

I'm forever surfing the net in search of new ideas, following trends, and researching other businesses. These periods often run late into the night and early in our business life it was not unusual for Maria to call out:

"Honey, are you coming to bed, or are you making love to your computer again?"

I thought I needed to share that because the following entries and discoveries were often made late at night. So as the saying goes, "With every great endeavour there is often great sacrifice." 😊

Understanding the Power of Numbers

If I were to present you with an offer to come and work for me for only a 30-day period and I would pay you 1 cent a day and

double it each day thereafter right up to day 30, would you take the job offer?

If you had said no, I think you may have reason to regret your decision. Let me explain:

Day 1 = 1c
Day 2 = 2c
Day 3 = 4c
Day 4 = 8c.....
Day 10 = \$ 5.12
Day 20 = \$ 5242.88
Day 30 = \$ 5.369 million!

The combined total in the end exceeds \$10 million. Many are surprised when first shown the power of compounding. The whole purpose of the example is to convey the importance of firstly, understanding numbers; and secondly, applying them to help you with your business.

What the Hell is a 'KPI'?

Now maybe it was just me, but I had never, ever heard the term 'KPI,' or for that matter knew the meaning of 'Key Performance Indicators' prior to real estate. Like I said, I had no formal business training and this was a totally foreign concept, or should I say, the actual term was foreign, not the concept.

By definition, a **Key Performance Indicator** is *‘a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively a company is achieving key business objectives.’* Organizations use KPIs at multiple levels to evaluate their success at reaching targets.

Once explained and the definition presented, it is a simple concept for most to understand and, more importantly, practice and put to use in business. Let me explain how I used a KPI measure in our previous hospitality business, ‘Flakey Jake’s Fish & Chips’, and how the lessons from that experience helped us in our real estate businesses.

Flakey Jake’s was a very successful Fish & Chips takeaway business in the Bayside suburb of Frankston East, Melbourne. With a lot of hard work over a 10-year period, we took that business from weekly sales of \$4,000 to over \$28,000. We went on and duplicated the operation to a further seven stores, employing over 250 staff, the majority between 15 and 17 years of age, and reached an annual turnover of \$6 million in over the counter sales.

THAT’S A LOT OF FISH AND CHIPS!

In 1999, we got voted “Melbourne’s Best Fish & Chips” and we went on to sell our flagship store for the highest sale price ever achieved for a Fish & Chip shop in Victoria (and, we believe, in Australia although we don’t have the appropriate information to verify that).

So how did we achieve it? We simply looked at the numbers. What I’m about to share would be one of the simplest

activities any business owner would need to do and I can almost guarantee that very few actually do.

What we did is calculate the average dollar value of every customer that came into the store. We compared over the counter orders with over the phone orders, lunchtime trading with evening trading. We were serving hundreds of orders on a weekly basis and they were all written down. Computerised cash registers were not part of our equipment list; they were extremely expensive at the time and we could not justify the investment. Our initial calculations were all processed manually. It took weeks to get a clear picture of the data. And, because of that effort, everything was about to change!

On calculating the average spend per customer, we discovered that over the phone orders were almost double in value to those made over the counter. It was a light bulb moment for us. Nevertheless we had a serious challenge: We only had one incoming phone line and when we were taking orders, other customers calling in were met with an engaged signal. Out of frustration, customers were forced to come to the store and invariably spend less. The obvious solution was to add another phone line which, of course, we did. We saw an immediate increase in sales. We followed that by investing in electronic cash registers. Again, our sales increased. Once again we reached capacity. With the electronic registers we could generate better data reports. From the data we worked out that we had the potential to quadruple our hourly volume by increasing the capacity in our cooking equipment and incoming phone lines. We moved forward with a major overhaul and redesign of our store: doubling the cooking

capacity and adding a further four incoming phone lines (the maximum available in our area).

So, the launch of our newly fitted store was complete and we began to trade with the new design features and efficiencies we had added as a result of our data research. The end result was that we took that store from achieving \$4,000 per week to being able to generate \$4,000 in sales in a two hour period at the busiest time of the week, 6 pm to 8 pm Friday. (Friday in Melbourne was Fish & Chips night!) Our weekly sales peaked in one record week to \$35,000 (unheard of in our industry) and averaged \$28,000.

Remember I mentioned that we have had tomatoes thrown at us in real estate? Trust me, we were getting plenty thrown at us with this operation! When news travelled throughout the industry of what we were planning to do, we were laughed at and told we were wasting our money and it would never work. But we stayed focused on what we knew and went with our calculated gut feel. Every Friday night we would have our competition come and visit and view our call centre staff (all six of them) with their phone sets, taking order after order, and see the volume of customers coming and going. Sure enough the tomatoes stopped and soon many others followed in our footsteps.

The changes we made revolutionised our operation and we were then able to expand further and duplicate our success in other areas. It was still a lot of hard work, including the long hours and six to seven days trading per week, but it was very satisfying to have achieved such success.

Invariably, the average customer spend was one of our significant key performance indicators. There were a few others, but that was the catalyst which moved us to change and improve.

So where do you start in your real estate business?

Know Your Market

Knowing your market tops the list when running a real estate business. By 'knowing your market' I don't just mean knowing the current marketplace value of a specific home you have listed. I mean understanding how much money your entire marketplace is worth.

I'm flabbergasted by the number of times I ask a real estate agency director, "How many homes are in your catchment area and what is the average turnover?" and I get nothing more than a blank look in response!

I recently chatted to a sales agent who was in the process of making the leap from employed sales agent to newly appointed director and owner of a new office. It was obvious that he was very excited about his upcoming career change. But when I asked him about his budget and the market share he needed in order to achieve his target, I was amazed that he had not done the appropriate research. He was about to embark on the establishment of a state-of-the-art venture without first checking out the potential of the market in the area.

Unfortunately, I knew at that point that he was destined to fail.

When Assessing a Marketplace, the Law of Supply and Demand and the Law of Averages Apply

Before selecting an area to work, research the following:

- (1) How many homes in the core catchment area do you propose to work?
- (2) What was the turnover per annum in the area for the last three years? In other words, on average, how many homes sell there each year?
- (3) What is the average commission charged in the area?
- (4) How many stand-alone offices and total active sales agents already work the area?

This information is at every agent's fingertips, either through the relevant Real Estate Institute or via a data portal such as RPData or PriceFinder. The whole exercise would easily take less than half a day to complete.

By answering these questions you will quickly get an overview of the market size and your potential earning capacity. From

this point, you can make an informed evaluation of the type of business that would be profitable in the area.

How Much Money is in a Service Area?

Based on my research, there is one stand-alone office for every 1,500 to 1,750 homes in any given area and for every 1,000 homes there is an average of three active sales agents.

The average turnover of an area is approximately 5% (I have seen figures from as low as 3% right up to 8%), so in an area of 10,000 homes you will find there would be approximately 500 sales per annum, 30 on the ground sales agents, and six offices.

Based on an average commission of \$10,000 per transaction, there would be a total of available commission in the market of around \$5,000,000. When applied over the market average, this figure would result in approximately \$830,000 per office and \$167,000 per sales agent. Knowing that the average sales agent earns 40% commission, we can work out that 40% of \$167,000 = \$66,400. As a general rule of thumb, this is how you can work out an average benchmark earning capacity figure per sales agent and for the agency.

The Law of Averages

Once you know the numbers it's time to establish a budget and formulate a business plan based on the average potential

earnings in your marketplace. It's important to establish your business plan around an average. Avoid shooting for the stars.

When working with averages your actual success rate will usually be higher. In other words, when you're not unrealistic in your projections, any excess will represent 'cream' earnings.

Going back to our example figures, if you were the sixth agency in the area you would budget for an average market share of \$830,000, or approximately 17%.

Now calculating your potential market is only half of the equation, the other half is to estimate the running costs of your office. Knowing both halves of the equation will allow you to determine whether or not it would be a profitable enterprise and one that would be worthy of the investment of capital and, even more importantly, your time.

The Appraisal to List Ratio

We can drill targets down even further by using what is called the appraisal to list ratio. This figure represents the average number of appraisals an agent needs to conduct in order to obtain a listing. Being based on averages, the ratio does vary from agent to agent. More experienced agents tend to have a low appraisal to list ratio because, in most cases, they appraise warm to hot leads compared to rookie agents who, in most cases, deal more with cold leads.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the term 'lead,' it simply refers to the opportunity to meet potential vendors who have a property to sell. The stronger/longer the relationship an agent has with a potential seller, the hotter the lead.

To calculate the appraisal to list ratio simply add up all your appraisals over, say, a six-month period and divide that figure by the number of listings you signed up during the same period.

For example, let's say you conducted 72 appraisals during a six-month period and listed 18 properties. Your appraisal to list ratio would be $72/18 = 4$, so 4:1. In other words, based on this appraisal to list ratio, for every four appraisals you list one property.

The List to Sell Ratio

This KPI represents the success ratio you have in selling the properties you list. That is, for every ten listings you secure, how many are eventually sold and how many are withdrawn? It would be great if all of them sold which would represent a 100% list to sell ratio, but this is an unlikely outcome.

The reality is that it is very rare to achieve a 100% list to sell ratio. Unfortunately, and regardless of how hard you work, there will always be those vendors who are unwilling to meet the market and therefore don't proceed with a sale. They may choose to take their home off the market and re-enter at a

later stage (which is the most favourable outcome apart from selling) or choose to try a competitor agency.

My research has shown that, on average, the best sales agents have a 90% + list to sell ratio while lower performing agents tend to have a list to sell ratio at around the 60%–70% mark. This is also affected by market conditions and, in a strong sellers' market the ratio is usually quite high, whereas in a buyers' market the ratio has a significant decline.

This is a critical point in the process of selling. If you are achieving less than an 80% list to sell ratio, you should really consider upskilling yourself on the art of vendor management and/or property pricing to suit the current market. Failure to address your shortfalls at this point could be very damaging and the subsequent potential loss of income could be phenomenal. Statistically, those agents that can't get it right often move from agency to agency, and have the lowest retention rates in the industry. A less than optimal list to sell ratio is a sure sign of danger.

The Opportunity Ratio

How good is your prospecting? How do you measure your efficiency in this area?

This is where the opportunity ratio comes into play. The effectiveness of your prospecting can be measured by calculating the number of properties that come to market and

of those that come to market, how many did you get to appraise. Note I mentioned appraised, not listed.

For example, let's say 100 properties were listed in your primary catchment area in the past six months (the longer the period, the more accurate the ratio will be). And of those 100 you got called into 30 of them. Your opportunity ratio comes to 30:100, i.e. 30%. The relevance of this is that you weren't called into 70 of the properties. That means that your current (or possibly lack of current), prospecting activities are not influencing 70% of the market. On the positive side, you have heaps of room to grow.

When Maria and I were in our first office, our initial opportunity ratio was as low as 10%. With consistent marketing initiatives and leveraged prospecting activities we reached over 65% for the opportunity ratio across our 7,500 catchment. In more concentrated areas of fewer homes, we were able to achieve a consistent 90%.

The Listing Success Ratio

Another significant ratio is the measure of the properties that do come to market that you have appraised and which have selected you as their agent compared to those that you lost to the competition.

For example, if you appraised ten properties which listed in the last 90 days and, of those, seven selected you as their agent you have a listing success ratio of 7:10, i.e. 70%. This is a

good ratio: the goal would be to aim for 100%, that is, everyone wants to choose you! As we know, that is extremely rare and unlikely, and for that matter, you may not want to work with every vendor. Not all business is good business.

The better agents are normally in the realm of 70% to 90% success ratio. Any lower and this should trigger a significant review of your listing presentation processes. One must be reminded that much effort is expended to get you in front of a potential seller, it's absolute show time and in many instances you only have one shot at the title. If you're not performing at your best all that work to get you there is wasted.

As an owner of a business, I was painfully reminded of the importance of this when reviewing an agent's overall performance. To paint the picture, a few years back we were approached by a highly recommended and recognised agent in our area. He was a veteran of over 15 years and although he wasn't what you would call a significantly high performer he was consistent and his customer service was excellent. He fit our core values and we felt we had alignment with our culture so we welcomed him to our team. Approximately six months later, we sat down and reviewed his results and the abovementioned KPIs.

To my surprise, his opportunity ratio in his service area was over 80%. That was one of the highest in the group. To my disappointment, his success ratio was less than 25%. A huge OUCH! And a valuable lesson to me as a leader to not have monitored the situation earlier. An immediate review of his listing process was made and, of course, there were holes

throughout the process. I was literally feeling sick. We implemented a rigorous training program for the agent. However, he was set in his ways and resisted change. There was no improvement in his listing success and a few months later we had to call it a day. It was unfortunate, but all the same a valuable lesson all round.

60 Second Lesson: If you don't fully understand how to calculate or apply KPIs into your business activities, find someone within your office or network that does. If all else fails, call me!

“It’s not the most
talented who wins.
It’s the most
relentless who
does.”

ROBIN SHARMA

CHAPTER 6 –THE SALES LIFECYCLE

Have You Seriously Had Your First Year in Real Estate?

Well have you? (And I am referring to those who have actually had at least one or more years in real estate). You're probably scratching your head wondering what the hell I am on about. The truth of the matter is that many agents roll one year into the next, not growing and wondering why things don't improve.

The question I pose is: Have you honestly conducted all the activities you know you should be doing, on every occasion (or at least 80% of the time), for a whole year. That is, databasing everyone, following up buyers and past appraisals, consistent marketing, and personal profiling. Have you called every one of your past sellers and buyers to congratulate them on their anniversary date? If the answer is no, imagine if you had!

The fact of the matter is that we all know what to do, it's just that we simply don't do what we know we should do. (And I am, and have been, as guilty as anyone here). We, for whatever reason, don't commit to brain tattooing core habits and disciplines and following through with them. Over the next few pages when parts of the Sales Cycle are presented and an idea pops up that you like, challenge yourself to commit to making it a habit and taking action to complete it.

The Momentum Point

Have you ever wondered why it is that some agents seem to get sellers call them directly with little effort on their part? Calls just magically appear on their phone with people on the other end wanting to list their property with them? Doesn't it frustrate you! What's their secret?

There is no secret: the agent has passed what I call the 'Momentum Point'. That is, the agent as a result of a lot of hard work in the past and by creating raving fans, has passed that point where traditional prospecting (the type most agents start with when commencing their real estate careers) tends to decrease due to the fact that they have become an attraction agent. That is, more people know of the agent than he or she knows people. They have become a 'brand' in the marketplace in their own right. It should be the ultimate aim of every agent. This is truly the point when an agent has 'arrived' ... and all credit to them.

To reach the momentum point takes most agents between two to three years of very, very hard consistent work. They actually have had their first year in real estate, over and over. Needless to say, they continue to prospect but their prospecting is normally to established clients and to nurture raving fans.

60 Second Lesson: The quality of the work you do today will directly affect the time it takes to reach the momentum point. The higher the quality, the higher the impact and the

shorter time frame required to make you a household name. It's all the 1% that count.

The Lifetime Value of a Customer

Do you look at a sales transaction as a once-off, or do you think to the end of time? Let me explain.

When we were training our staff at Flakey Jake's, we explained the importance of the value of every single customer that entered our store. We would tell them that the average customer spend was \$20. At face value \$20 is not a lot of money. But we didn't want them to think of it as a 'single transaction.' We wanted them to understand the 'lifetime value' of each customer.

And we demonstrated it like this:

- A customer visits the store once every two weeks, 26 weeks per year;
- Each customer remained in our area for approximately 10 years;
- Each customer potentially referred us to three more customers.

The total combination had a minimum potential sales revenue of \$20,800.

Now that caused us to look at each customer very differently when they walked through the door. Even more so if they

complained as a result of us making an honest mistake. Do you think we did everything humanly possible to keep our customers happy? You bet we did. We went out of our way, every time. It was ingrained in our culture and the whole team knew it.

What about real estate? Let's do the maths...

- Average sales commission: \$10,000
- Average selling frame: once every 5 years (average selling periods do vary, but if you only analyse those that regularly sell, the period is around 5 years)
- Each 'happy client' refers you to 2 clients per year.
- The example we will use is over a 10-year period. That is, you sell for them on two occasions in the 10 years. Each year they refer 2 clients to you.
- Original seller: $2 \times \$10,000$
- 10 years \times 2 referrals per year = $20 \times \$10,000 = \$200,000$
- Total potential commission earnings = \$220,000. And we haven't even talked about leads coming off the selling process of those homes!

This should be a light bulb moment for every agent. When you next consider how much to spend on a settlement gift, or inviting a client to a cinema night every year that may cost you

\$20 odd dollars, be sure to remind yourself of the potential value of that client. The investment pales in perspective to what the potential actual return could be.

Database 1000

First of all, who should go on your database? ... Everyone who potentially has a home or could refer you to someone who has a home that may eventually sell. And I say 'may' because we simply don't know what their particular circumstances are, and don't know for sure if they will ever sell. So to put this into perspective, every time you drive to any location I want you to look at the houses you pass and say to yourself, "The owner of every one of those properties needs me to sell it for them, and I need to have their details on my database." Think about it: you probably pass hundreds if not thousands of homes on a daily basis. It's an interesting observation.

When we talk about having a database of people we are not referring to random names you have added that you really don't have a relationship with. With reference to this section, people on your database would be those that you contact at least four to six times per year with at least one of those being a direct phone contact. If you were to randomly call any one of them they will recognise who you are. This is very important, so please don't underestimate the potential impact.

Through research I have completed with my own teams and various other offices records and results, we calculate a database value according to the following example:

Contacts in database (clean records):	1,000
Average selling commissions:	\$10,000
Turnover ratio 12.5%, i.e. 125 listings per annum	125
Potential appraisals 80% of the 125:	100
Listing success 80% of the 100:	80
Selling success 90% of the 80:	72

Based on the above example and an average selling commission of \$10,000, the annual value of this database of 1000 contacts, who are contacted at least four to six times per year with one of those contacts being a direct phone call, is \$720,000.

I have used this modelling against many databases of various sizes and in different areas and offices and the results have been within a few percentage points of each other.

60 Second Lesson: Review your own database: select the number of contacts which fall into the above category and reverse engineer the result. That is, work backwards. Start with your database as if it were one year prior. Then calculate how many actually came to market, how many of those did you get to appraise, and how many did you sell.

The end dollar value is the yearly potential earnings of your current database.

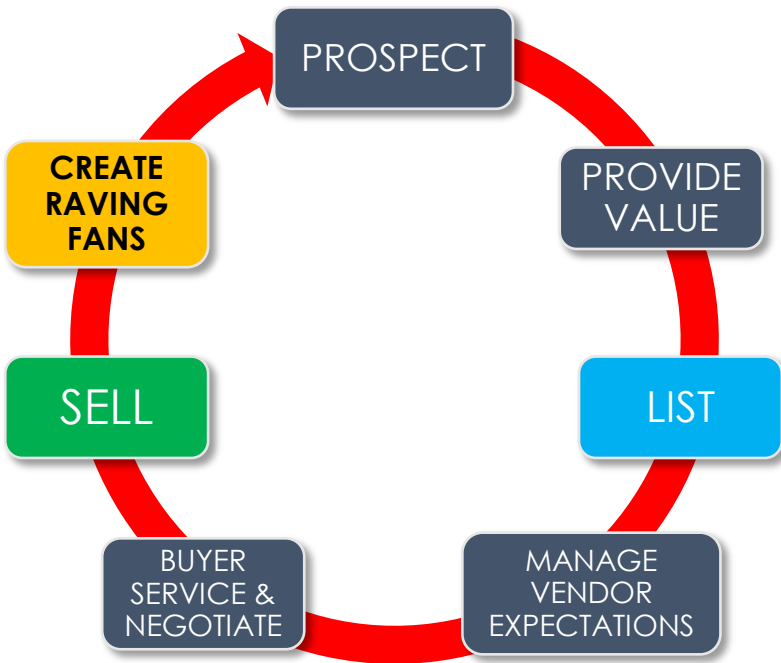
The 7 Phases of Selling and Lifecycle Marketing

When we introduce a new sales agent to the Evview Group, we feel it is important to not only teach them the logistics of everyday selling but also the theory and methodology behind it, so they have a full understanding of why they do certain activities at certain times of the Sales Lifecycle. Teaching them effective prospecting techniques, scripts and dialogues, what to say and when to say it, how to deliver a pre-list kit, buyer negotiations, and so forth all come into it. But they are techniques to be used as tools: learning why you do it is like having a road map to follow that will get you to your destination every time. Without it, it's like the builder building a home without a set of drawings to follow. You need to know why you do it and have a clear picture of what your desired outcome will be.

Our first program is named the '7 Phases of Selling'. This program identifies the seven critical aspects of the Sales Lifecycle, the purpose of each, what to do in each phase to achieve the best impact and result, and, for all intents and purposes, to keep the sales agent aligned with the process and keep them on track. Our objective is to bring some sort of order to their work flow.

We also felt it necessary for the sales agent to have an understanding of the marketing stages within the 7 Phases of Selling and how all the parts interconnect. To best explain it, we use a strategy made available from Infusionsoft called Lifecycle Marketing. It categorises the marketing cycle into three stages, ATTRACT, SELL and WOW. Combining the two and identifying where everything sits in the Sales Lifecycle, a sales agent can get a clear vision of how all the 'moving parts' of selling work and how to leverage one off the other. The below is a short overview of our program.

The 7 Phases of Selling



Prospect + Provide Value = ATTRACT

Prospect. When we talk about prospecting most would assume that the objective is to find sellers ready to sell. In real estate sales our prospective clients are homeowners who have a property to sell. On average, people in our target market sell their home every five to seven years. During those five to seven years, a homeowner will spend some time in what I refer to as ‘real estate mode,’ when they are thinking about selling. That is, that period of time they have made a decision and are *seriously* ready to sell, which in most cases is approximately two to three consecutive months. As a percentage, if we take two months as the time they think they will go to market, and let’s say five years as the turnover period, at any point in time there is only a 3% chance that we will capture the attention of those sellers in their ‘real estate mode.’ That is a very small window of opportunity to capture the seller’s attention and the opportunity decreases even further the longer the turnover period is.

Understanding this means that we need to ‘ATTRACT’ (which is the first stage of Lifecycle Marketing), by not only simply prospecting but making sure our prospecting is providing *value* during the time our home sellers are *not* in ‘real estate mode.’ In this stage, we also identify our target audience and, of course, collect contact details of the leads that come through and enter them into a database for future follow-up and client nurturing.

Now there are many forms and types of prospecting techniques available to a sales agent. There are also many

training events and online programs, webinars and videos, which are easily accessed and affordable. In actual fact, there has never been more free content available in the history of real estate sales. There really is no excuse. As mentioned previously, we all have access to the same ingredients, it's how we put them altogether that makes the difference. At Evview, we have the 'High Impact and Wipe-out Program'. The program outlines a set of activities that have a sequential order to ensure that our agents start their day with high priority tasks, such as daily vendor feedback and hot appraisal follow-up. Following the program provides the agent with the best chance of a positive result in the shortest time frame, hence the name 'High Impact.' The 'Wipe-out' program, which goes hand in hand with High Impact, is creating an environment to give our agents the greatest opportunity to win listings unopposed. That is, establish so much prior trust and credibility that when it comes to selling, the client invites no other agent to appraise their home. They would regard the agent for their real estate requirements as they would regard their solicitor for all legal matters and their accountant for their finances. These types of relationships are hard to break.

If I were to ask you who is the better agent which would you choose: the agent that wins a listing over two others, or the agent that won without having to compete? Loaded question I know and the obvious answer is the latter. More importantly, it is very achievable if you enable the correct processes and follow a system.

Provide value. Value-adding in prospecting is simply providing the type of information potential sellers would be interested in when it comes to selling their home. The simplest of which is, “How much are homes selling for in their immediate area, and how long is it taking?” Yes, we can add filling into the information, but most of the time that is to simply satisfy the agent’s own mindset that somehow if we provide lots of ‘different’ information, the seller would look at us more favourably than our competitor. Sorry, I hate to burst anyone’s bubble, but while there might be the odd few sellers who like lots of statistical data (and I might just be one of them), or the odd recipe card, keeping it simple always works best. Short, sharp, and straight to the point. Make it easy for your potential client to recognise you as providing consistent, simple, and informative information on the current market in their neighbourhood.

The key strategy in the ‘attract’ stage is when you finish prospecting remember to keep prospecting. I think most established agents know what I mean, it shouldn’t be too hard to guess.

60 Second Lesson: Buy two diaries, one for prospecting material you deliver to your service area and database. This will give you an analogue snapshot of how much prospecting you do, week to week, month to month. By the end of the year, the thickness of the diary should be well over double. This is an accountability exercise. The other diary is for all direct mail you will collect from competitor agents targeting your home. Make sure you don’t have a ‘no junk mail’ sign on your letter box. The purpose of this diary is to identify

what type of material your competitors are using and how consistently they market themselves. You may find very few are.

List + Manage Vendor Expectations = SELL

List. Listing, next to negotiating the sale of a property, is the greatest adrenaline rush and sometimes even more so. The listing phase is that part of the selling cycle that brings you, as the agent, and the seller, together. It is the culmination of your prospecting and client nurturing that has got you to this stage. You may have also had to compete with other agents for the business and came out the winner. Formalised by the contract of engagement between agent and seller it is more than just signing a legal document.

Early in my real estate career, I was told that once you secure a listing you actually secure a liability from that day forward until it sells. You only crystallise a return on the investment when the sold sticker goes up and the proceeds from the sale are deposited into your general account. If it doesn't sell, you have lost both time and money. The other piece of advice I was given is that a listing is sold at the time it is listed; that is, there is so much rapport and trust between client and agent that the seller has full confidence in the ability of the agent and sees him as their trusted advisor and follows their advice. It is priced competitively, the seller invests in effective marketing collateral, and the home is presented at its best.

Our responsibility to the seller is to provide information before, during, and after the sale so that the seller is armed with all the right information to make an informed and logical decision to sell. At Eview we use a suite of tools including online systems and our team's 'sold stories' to provide quality information to listed sellers.

There are other terms used to describe ***Managing Vendor Expectations***, which have a very negative connotation and are thrown around in the industry. Having this type of mindset is not healthy and certainly not working in the seller's best interest. Every time I met with a client, I wanted them to leave that meeting knowing and feeling that I gave them the best service and advice. I wanted them to feel 100% confident that no matter what I was in their corner and would do everything reasonably possible to get them the best result. I truly believed I could. They just needed to feel and see it.

Buyer Service + Negotiate + Sell + Create Raving Fans = WOW

We have come to the last stage of the Lifecycle Marketing and the last three phases of selling. We will look at each phase individually and see how they all come together to create and complete the 'WOW' stage of Lifecycle Marketing.

Buyer service and negotiate. Quite simply this is the most undervalued phase of the selling cycle. If you want to create raving fans service buyers like there is no tomorrow. You will

stand out from most agents in the industry. Yes, you may feel at times that there are so-called 'time wasters' when dealing with buyers. I just want you to remember that the buyer is the seller and the seller is the buyer. That makes up the whole real estate community. They are both one and the same. Give great buyer service. All you have to do is call them back and you will be ahead of the pack. Nothing more needs to be said. Rant over!

Negotiate. It is an art form and cannot be left to chance. There is a clear process of creating competition and getting buyers to have an emotional connection to a property and, done with full transparency, it creates an environment of competition which will achieve the best result for your vendors. If you are not skilful and confident in this area, stop what you are doing. It is a travesty to your vendors and you need to seek assistance. We are dealing with people's most valuable asset and we have a duty of care to protect it so they can maximise their return. Why else would they engage an agent to sell their home? They might as well do it themselves. Make this one of your key points of difference.

Now we come to the actual ***sell***; that is, we bring two parties together. One who wishes to sell and the other who wishes to buy that which the seller wants to sell. We formalise this by having the two parties agree to terms and sign a legal sales contract. Your role in this part of the equation is to ensure both parties are taken through the journey as smoothly and stress-free as possible. Remember, you might do this every day, but the general public do it on average every five to seven years.

Now the last phase of the Selling Cycle, ***create Raving Fans***. Raving Fans are those clients that place you on a pedestal and think you are a superhero. They refer you to family and friends and are your advocates when you are not there. You gave them an experience like no other and the way you made them feel will remain long after the details of the transaction are forgotten. You will often hear, “What did you make us pay for this home?” if they were a buyer, or if they were a past seller, “What did we sell that place for?” It’s the way you made them *feel* during the whole selling phase that will remain with them. This is only achieved when we have the correct mindset and are wanting to really over-deliver.

So the final stage of ‘WOW’, encompassing the last three phases of the selling cycle, is the positive emotional build-up and those wow moments that the client felt as a result of the service experience you provided. In all three phases, you are dealing with both the seller and the buyer: it’s an important aspect of the phases to understand. Both parties must be made to feel they are equally important. Yes, we work and get paid by the sellers. That does not mean we do not manage the buyer’s wishes appropriately. This is only achieved by going above and beyond for both parties with a win-win attitude.

The moments of wow will have customers returning to you time and time again and lead them to refer customers who will be compelled to use you.

60 Second Lesson: Study the 7 phases of selling. Learn where they fit in the ATTRACT, SELL and WOW marketing strategy. For the full Lifecycle Marketing Strategy document, go to infusionsoft.com.

CHAPTER 7 – SO YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH THE BIG BOYS AND GIRLS?

“I Want to Run My Own Office!”

How those words resonate with me! In the natural order of things becoming a business owner or director is the aspiration of many successful sales agents. Up and coming sales agents see their directors drive flashy cars and come and go as they please without being answerable to anyone, and with the freedom to ‘run their own show’. At face value it looks like the dream job.

Behind the scenes, away from the shiny façade, for most, the reality is very removed from the perception. Before we assess the pros and cons of running your own office, let’s look at the typical career journey of a sales agent who aspires to own their own real estate agency.

It normally begins by joining an agency as a junior sales cadet regardless of age. They get shown the ropes, some with full induction, and some with on-the job training while others merely get thrown in the deep end to sink or swim!

If the new agent’s DNA makeup suits running a business then the initial spark will generally be ignited in the belly early on. In fact, I believe in most cases the seed is planted to run an agency within those first 12 months. Maria certainly had the

seed planted early on. Most will approach the idea in one of three ways:

1. “If this guy can run a business, anyone can!”
2. “If this were my business, I would do it differently!” or
3. “My director is an inspiration. I want to be just like him!”

I’m sure there are other catalysts that set the fires burning, but for most, the kindling is ready to be lit if it’s in a person’s DNA makeup. I would definitely put Maria and I in that category.

Why do many people become sales agents in the first place? Because of either a good or a negative experience when purchasing or selling property themselves (in nine out of ten cases it will be the result of a negative experience, where the thinking was along the lines of, “The service I received was lousy! I’m sure I could do far better!”).

The most famous example of this was how legendary American sales agent, Bob Bohlem began his real estate career in the 1950s. Having sought out the services of his local agents to sell one of his properties, Bob saw an opportunity to change the game and blow the competition out of the water. As mentioned earlier in the book, these days we know that in many cases our greatest competitive advantage is our competitors’ lack of, and in some instances, non-existent professionalism.

As for ourselves, business ownership is what we are absolutely passionate about and we encourage anyone who may have a slight inkling to take up the challenge or, at the very least, investigate. We know business ownership may not be for everyone but the world of real estate is going through massive change and there are many surprising opportunities available. It is not out of reach from both a financial and experience capacity. And that's where we come into it. By joining a group of business owners like those in our network who have already travelled the path, you can profit from our experiences, save money, and fast track your business success.

Our passion for business ownership set us on our Eview journey to create a platform and business system that others could benefit and profit from. We have done many things correctly but we have equally made many 'mistakes' which have cost us thousands of dollars and many days of effort. (At a later stage in life, I will gather all the experiences and fill a book to share with the world. It will be a great read!) The word 'mistakes' is in inverted commas because at the end of the day a mistake, although it may have cost you time and money, is actually a valuable learning experience. The cost, or should I say 'investment', of those perceived losses may at times be great and at times small. Whatever the case, accept it for what it is, ensure you have learnt from the experience, and move on to bigger and better things. Sometimes our mistakes lead to our biggest opportunities.

“I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

MICHAEL JORDAN

‘Pissing’ Money Up Against the Wall

I need to share this story, as it is relevant to anyone contemplating starting a business and, for that matter, any agent working within an agency. It really applies to everyone. Before we commenced the Eview Group, our business partner David Politakis had not been in a formal business as such: that is, prior to Eview, he was not involved in a major business operation with high start-up costs, lots of staff, and large overheads. Knowing this, I felt it prudent to share an important lesson we had learnt along our 20-year business journey: I called it the ‘pissing’ money up against the wall event.

In one of our very first planning meetings prior to the launch of Eview I had a whiteboard set up and on the whiteboard there was a cartoon figure of a gentleman standing in front of a urinal depicting him in the process of having a pee. I’m sure we can all visualise a mental picture of it. The analogy the diagram refers to the lesson I wanted David to understand: that in business, in many cases through no fault of your own, there will be circumstances that will cost you money. This is what I reference as ‘pissing money up against a wall.’ Now there are two ways you can handle this: scream up and down, stomp your feet, and get angry; or simply accept the outcome, learn, and move on. (This goes back to attitude; it’s not what happens to you that matters, it’s how you respond to the situation that does.)

I knew from past experience that we would face this on many occasions. It could be early in our journey or it could be later

on. It wasn't a matter of 'if', it was purely a matter of time. Sure enough, two weeks prior to our launch, we had paid a designer \$8000 to complete some work for our launch, and the designer didn't deliver. The invoice had been paid in good faith prior to the completion of the work at the request of the supplier and subsequently, we were not able to get it refunded. Now, yes, we could have pursued the supplier and applied pressure through legal means. I have gone down that path before, only to find that the energy and emotional blockages that brings cost you more in the long run. The best response is to accept the 'pissing money up against the wall' concept, put it down to one of many 'lessons', and move on.

The business partners often look back to those early days (even though it only feels like yesterday!) and reflect on many instances like the above. What's more refreshing is how we can all look back, smile, crack jokes, and laugh about them. We've seriously had some funny times and experiences.

60 Second Lesson: If this has happened to you in the past, review how you handled the situation. Was it handled correctly, and if not, what could you have changed to have made into a positive? There are lessons and opportunities in every outcome.

Don't Let Perfect Get in the Way of Starting

Procrastination is one of the greatest killers of dreams. The other is wanting everything to be picture perfect before we get started. Due diligence is one thing, research and development another. Waiting until you get it 100% perfect will only lead to delays or even complete avoidance. The act of simply doing is far better than not starting until its perfect.

Nike nailed it when they came up with the slogan, “Just do it.” We’ve all heard the saying. This is a real live example:

Our dining room table was where we actually started Eview. We had no office, no website, no CRM, no brochures, no branding, absolutely nothing remotely close to looking like the tools needed to start listing or selling properties. But we did.

Maria had a contact who was keen to get going on the sale of her property. We advised the seller that we were at least four to six weeks from the office being ready. She looked at Maria and said, “I’m assuming you guys have called yourself ‘Eview’ because most of the enquiry is coming from the World Wide Web, is that correct?” Which of course was true. The blockage for not having an office was ours, not the sellers. So of course, we set out to get the property live, created a one-off brochure and board (which looked nothing like our final design), loaded it straight onto realestate.com.au, domain.com.au, and a few others (eview.com.au website had not been built then), and we launched our first property. We sold it six weeks later for a

great result, and had our first commission check around the time we opened the doors to the office. Happy vendor, happy agents!

60 Second Lesson: Sometime we complicate things and procrastinate about wanting things to be perfect. Great service is not a result of having everything perfect; it's a result of thinking outside the box and doing your very best with the resources at hand.

“The activity you are most avoiding contains your biggest opportunity.”

ROBIN SHARMA

Wearing the Director's Hat

Moving from sales agent to director and taking ownership and management of a real estate practice is a big commitment and in many instances a huge leap of faith. What many don't realise is that being a high performing sales agent and a director are two totally different roles and require different sets of skills.

Every business needs a leader, and that leader must understand every facet of the business' core functions. I'm not suggesting that the leader has to be good at each function. They just need to know each function well enough to lead and drive the team effectively.

Setting up your own business requires financial resources and time, and the stamina to face the emotional rollercoaster you will face on almost a daily basis. It takes a strong desire and resolve to get through it all. Why am I telling you all this? To allow you to make an informed decision and be prepared.

Some have put Eview on a pedestal because of the relatively smooth ride we had on our journey to success. What outsiders don't know though was that my business partners and I all brought 20-plus years of personal business experience to the table: meaning we all understood how to run a business and what to expect. In fact, it was this invaluable prior business experience that I believe was the key to creating a successful business model.

There are eight components to building any successful business.

They are:

- Marketing and building your brand
- Finding and winning new business
- Delivery of service
- Finance and administration
- Technology and infrastructure
- Human resources and team building
- Innovation and development
- Key performance indicators and profitability

Within each component there are sub-sections and activities. There are many moving parts within every business which will require the leader's oversight. At times, it can be extremely overwhelming when you first enter the world of business ownership. What we can confidently say is, if you do it right it's 100% worth it!

Culture, Money and Freedom: What do You Stand For?

A business needs to stand for something. What it stands for must be a reflection of the leader. The three words 'Culture, Money and Freedom' represent what we stand for in our business. We are committed to providing the best culture, and

an environment which enables our team to grow into their full potential, and that potential is whatever they want it to be.

We want them to be so excited about what they do, and that the contribution they provide is of the greatest value to the people they serve; in return, we recognise their accomplishments at every opportunity.

When it comes to money it certainly isn't the love of money we practice. We provide our team with business planning tools and knowledge which enables them to plan for their future and take control of their financial situation. Through financial discipline, we encourage our team to take full control of their personal destiny and carve out a future their future selves will be grateful for!

Freedom! The elusive element that most seek. Maria and I have always been in business for ourselves and freedom is what we most appreciate that being in business for ourselves provides. Now most people believe that running a business ties you down, and in some cases it does. Flakey Jake's was one of those businesses that required, at most times, extremely long hours and working six to seven days a week, 365 days a year. It was extremely punishing at times when it came to the work-life balance. But our definition of freedom relates more to choices. When you are in control of your own 'vehicle' you have the choice of where you travel with it, which road you take, how fast you drive it, and how many days you park it the garage. You can see where I'm going with this ... It's totally your choice. We have always loved the ability and choice to go on holidays when we wanted to, at the drop

of a hat in some cases, or to decide to take an unscheduled day off (or two!) and not have to be answerable (within reason of course!) to anyone. And that's what we have always wanted for our team.

Yes, there are boundaries to everything. Be aware, however, that business is changing at such a rapid pace ... the workforce is seeking more today than yesterday and what worked yesterday, will not necessarily work tomorrow. There is a shift in the expectations of both consumers and the workforce. I am predicting that the way we work today will be very different in five to ten years, if not earlier.

60 Second Lesson: What you stand for and what makes up your core values is not something that is designed in an afternoon workshop session. It is something that evolves over time, and at times changes. Discovering your true values is like finding true north. It is a mixture of what your purpose is and those things in life you value and aspire to achieve. It will take just a little more time than 60 seconds; enjoy the search!

The Director's Syndrome

Have you heard this term before? I hadn't until I witnessed the so-called director's syndrome for myself back when I was involved in the franchise group before establishing Eview. There was a particular sales agent who had just made the exciting transition from senior salesperson to office director.

What happened to this particular salesperson-turned-director caught me by complete surprise. Remember, rather than moving up the chain, I had come into real estate as a business owner from the very beginning.

In a nutshell, the new director dropped the ball soon after taking over as director. He had let the fact that he was now the business owner go to his head. He felt as though he had 'arrived' and believed that, as a result, he could now afford to delegate all sales activities down the line and start taking it easy. There were extended holidays and he immediately delegated activities he should have been responsible for. His mindset was still in 'sales agent,' and for that matter 'employee' mode. It was an absolute mess.

Progressing from salesperson to director actually entails more work, not less (a lot more work in fact). From the aspect of money, in many instances (and I would consider most instances), you will have an initial pay cut, and a substantial one at that.

Fortunately for this individual, within six months of becoming agency director, another agent bought him out and quickly took over the role of director, leaving Mr 'I have arrived' to slip quietly back into his sales role (it was fortunate for him that he had this job to go back to).

60 Second Lesson: Business ownership is now available in various models and in varying capacities. Select one that suits your DNA profile: it's really okay to start small and grow into something bigger. In fact, from our experience, we

highly recommend it.

It's Lonely Being an Independent

When we commenced Eview, fully independent of any other group or brand, we were truly out on our own. With only a few years of experience in real estate business ownership, looking back, it was quite a big step to take. But as we mentioned before, our 'start-up energy' just kept getting us through.

But it was very, very, lonely. We had no one to turn to when we were faced with challenges. The depth of our connections was extremely shallow and we often found that having created such a new business model, which few understood, there wasn't the opportunity to learn from others who had already travelled the same path.

Fortunately, that did change and we built our own network of like-minded individuals who supported us through the difficult times and helped celebrate with us in the good times. As humans we all feel the need to feel we belong. It's part of the human makeup.

Nowadays, we get to speak with many independents and share our respective journeys, helping each other where we can. It's a great feeling, even more so today with the launch of 'Your Brand Your Business,' where we have had the great fortune and ability to allow independents to join our group and yet retain their branding, even redesigning their current

brands and providing a whole new look and energy. It's amazing to see the leverage these businesses can draw from by not only re-enforcing their own brand but combining the support and backing of a national brand. It's this part of our business model that gets us really fired up!

From an impartial point of view, starting your own brand is not a journey everyone should take. It takes a hell of a lot of work, and you need to have a long-term view of growing the business. Should you take this path, be sure to surround yourself with a great support team and mentors. The more people you can draw on the better, not only for their experience and knowledge but also for emotional support and encouragement.

The Harmonious Workplace: Is There Such a Thing?

Up to now, you are probably thinking we have an absolute magical place to work in where everyone loves each other, each and every day of the week! And I must say, hand on heart, I really do believe we have one of the best workplaces in the industry. I do rate it as 9 out of 10 (and will always strive for 10!). It's not just pretty good, it's amazingly good!

However, we do need to put some perspective around this. Everyone talks about working in the perfect, harmonious environment with a zero tolerance of negativity. And while I do subscribe to this 100%, I have to say that it is an elusive

goal. How people expect to maintain a perfect working environment when everyone brings personal issues from home, experiences different challenges, and has different emotional expectations, is truly beyond my belief. We need to learn to accept people for their individual characteristics, attitudes, and ups and downs; learn to dance with them, support them, and know when to offer help and when to leave them alone.

Accept that there will be times when you will have disagreements with fellow colleagues ... it is a natural part of any business. But don't let that destroy your relationships and working environment. You need to have the confidence to address uncomfortable situations head on. Don't let them fester and always try to see the situation from the other side. This is the best way to find a mutually agreeable resolution and get things back on track so everyone can move on harmoniously. It isn't always easy and there is never a winning side in a dispute. The win is always in the act of resolving the issue.

Workplace culture starts with you as the business leader and filters down to your team. How you react to different situations will have a direct bearing on the morale of individuals in your team and the energy of the group as a whole. As a business leader, workplace culture is probably the most challenging and at times frustrating issue to handle. When human emotions are involved, the solution to a problem is rarely going to be crystal clear as everyone is different. As a leader, the most important thing is to gauge the energy of your team as a whole and understand when and

how to react when the group energy level is either low or excessive.

A working environment is no different to a family environment, it's never just smooth sailing. It would be unrealistic to expect it be perfect all the time. Just as maintaining positive relationships at home requires effort, so, too, does establishing and maintaining a positive workplace culture. As the business leader you need to learn to be a diplomat. Be empathic: in other words, see things from both sides and be tolerant of the other person's point of view, even if it means biting your tongue at times. To expect energetic, egocentric salespeople to work in constant harmony is totally unrealistic.

60 Second Lesson: Never burn bridges with colleagues or, for that matter, with anyone. Your ability to forgive and move on, regardless of whether you think you are 100% right, will define your character in more ways than you think.

Have Faith in Everyone, But Don't Count on Anyone

This may initially sound as though I am implying that we oversee our team to make sure they are performing. This is not the intention and certainly shouldn't be your end game.

But, as a leader, it's important to have checks and balances in all areas of your business. Having checks and balances in place will allow you to feel confident that you can delegate and

empower your people to complete tasks efficiently on their own. In accounting terms, this is called 'reconciliation'. I'm not suggesting that you micromanage your team; I'm simply encouraging you to establish key performance indicators that allow you to ensure everything stays on track. The last thing you want is for some part of your business process to go astray without detecting the problem, and later find that it has caused you loss or damage of some sort.

60 Second Lesson: Review all your processes on a six monthly basis. If possible, allow team members the opportunity to swap tasks and activities to add variety to their work. This will also give the opportunity to have a fresh set of eyes on a particular task or process which may, as a result, lead to its improvement.

There's a Big Difference Between Cash Flow and Profit

It's your business, so when it comes to the finances it's vital that you are personally responsible for the day-to-day cash flow and profitability reporting. If you aren't prepared to take on this responsibility, then you should seriously reconsider the decision to go into business for yourself. We have observed a reluctance to stay in control of the finances as the undoing of many businesses. I'm not suggesting that you should become the office bookkeeper. I'm simply saying you need to be monitoring the finances daily, weekly, or at the very least, monthly.

At Eview, we have reporting tools that give us a snapshot of our business' profitability on a daily basis. I have never waited for my accountant to tell me how my business was travelling. If I had, it would have been all over long ago. No one cares about your money as much as you do, not even your accountant.

Accountants work on what I call 'after the fact' data (profit and loss statements and balance sheets). One of the biggest adjustments I had to make when I moved from hospitality into real estate was analysing the cash flow of the business. In hospitality it was almost all cash over the counter. At the end of each week we could easily calculate how much we had spent, how much we had collected, and the profit we had made. There was no need for budgeting our cash reserves.

Cash flow had to be managed entirely differently in real estate. In most cases, we wouldn't see the revenue generated from a sale made that day for another three months (much to my surprise as mentioned earlier!). This put an enormous strain on cash reserves, as most landlords, suppliers, and office expenses had to be paid within 30 days and wages had to be paid fortnightly regardless of when the money came in.

Mark my words, educating yourself about sound financial control will pay dividends.

60 Second Lesson: If you are waiting for your accountant to tell you if you're in profit or not, you're in trouble! Calculate profit in the month the sale is made. If by the end of the month, hypothetically speaking, those sales did not generate

enough net revenue to cover expenses for that month you are in a loss situation.

Be Personally in Charge of the Bills

As CEO of Eview, I am responsible for the management of the company's finances. One of my weekly duties is to check every invoice that is due for payment. While I don't physically pay the invoices, I do eye-check them to ensure that all charges are appropriately apportioned to the departments within our business. Weekly perusal of all invoices also enables me to keep a hand on the overall operating expenses of the business. It takes no more than 30 minutes of my time each week. This simple exercise gives me a hands-on understanding of our financial position on a regular basis.

The other benefit to checking all invoices myself is ensuring they are all correct. It may or may not surprise you to know how often I find mistakes on supplier invoices, ranging from incorrect charges to non-disclosed rate increases. In our very first year, we actually recorded more than \$6,000 in incorrect charges to our business over a 12-month period. Had I not picked up on those errors we would have been none the wiser.

A final advantage to personally checking all invoices is that it will allow you to quickly work out which expenses represent the 'fat' in your business. This knowledge will allow you to assess where you may need to consider trimming back to

keep the business running lean. A more detailed explanation follows.

Always Operate in ‘CODE-RED’

When you’re a start-up, the most mindful aspect of your business planning is that of expenditure. Capital resources are normally scarce, and you need to make sure that every dollar spent is put to best use and gives you maximum return.

We often hear that many businesses start in the garage or, as in our case, at the dining room table. Being frugal goes hand-in-hand with, and is a natural expectation when, starting a business. But that seems to change as many businesses grow in revenue and profits. They seem to take on a more relaxed approach to expenditure and overheads. They justify added costs by one of the more common responses, “It’s only just one more sale.” They add more support staff without clearly defining their goals and outcomes, more times than not as a knee jerk reaction to a slight increase in activity, without confirming the impact it will have on the bottom line.

My thoughts on this are a little different. As mentioned, I come from a very conservative approach and have a thought process and application that we should be running our business in what I call ‘code red.’ Code red means that should our volume of sales drop by 50% tomorrow, we know what unnecessary costs we can let go of instantly without affecting our customer service. We are willing to examine every expenditure with the question, “Will this change our business

for the worse if we remove it?” If the answer is no, and the item is more of a ‘feel good,’ then cut it loose.

It may not seem like a hell of a lot initially, but every \$200 per month expense you can cut amounts to a potential overseas airline ticket or mini holiday you can use for yourself or a family member over a 12-month period. Small amounts add up to large amounts very quickly.

60 Second Lesson: Create a scheduled task of reviewing fixed expenses, monthly if possible, or at the very least quarterly, and commit to operating in ‘code-red.’ Involve administration teams in the process as they are often the best people in the business to identify potential savings.

Pay All Bills on Time and Make Your Suppliers Your Raving Fans!

A business I was once involved in before entering real estate was signwriting. Like real estate, signwriting is a service industry in that you quote for a job and, if the customer accepts your quote, are awarded the contract for the job. Payment terms were generally 20% deposit on acceptance of the quote with the balance due on completion of the job. But do you think anyone actually paid us on the day of completion? You guessed it: no they did not! Non-payment on job completion was so common that we had to employ a staff member to handle the outstanding accounts (like an in-house debt collector). We also had to deal with the small percentage

of customers that refused to pay. While that small percentage represented only a minor portion of the overall turnover, it nonetheless equated to up to 25% in lost profit when weighed up against the overall profit and loss of the business.

Fortunately, it is extremely rare in real estate for an agency not to be paid commission once a transaction has taken place. This is due to the fact that we hold deposit moneys in trust and pay ourselves the commission owing from those funds.

Because I know from experience how debilitating it can be for a business to have to wait excessively long for payment, I have made it a company policy that our suppliers are always paid on time or sooner. The flow on benefit we enjoy from having made that simple decision has been tremendous. Not only do we have a great relationship with all our suppliers, but we also receive special rates, discounts, and exceptional service from them. In fact, whenever there is a problem, our suppliers all bend over backwards to help us. In effect, our courtesy towards our suppliers has made them our raving fans to the point where they often refer clients to us as they know our business philosophy of doing the right thing reflects upon our service levels to landlords and vendors. What a great win-win relationship!

At the end of the day, your suppliers are indirectly your business partners. Treat them as you would like others to treat you.

“Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of your clients.”

RICHARD BRANSON

Who Are Your Customers?

When I first put this question to directors and business owners, the majority respond with, “Our sellers and landlords,” in which they are correct ... to a point. We have had the pleasure of working with hundreds of people in many different industries and businesses. Some have been business partners, many have been employees. There has always been one common denominator in all our businesses: the happier our people are, the better service they give our customers. So although the sellers and landlords (the end users) are the clients we derive our income from, our front line people, those that actually serve our clients, are the most important. Because if they are not happy and at their best your service to end users will be poor. They will vote with their feet and take their money to spend elsewhere.

As a leader, you need to remind yourself that all the people in your organisation are your customers. We have always had that mindset and it is part of our culture. We speak it to the team and we just don't pay lip service to it, we 100% walk the talk.

As an example, when it comes to sales agents within our offices who are on specific splits and say one agent is on a 60/40 (60% to the agent and 40% to the office), we never look at the equation and say we are 'giving' them 60%, we always look at it as they are giving us 40% and we pose the question, what are WE providing THEM for our share of the commission? How can we improve our service to our first line customers?

It is a very different mindset, and I encourage everyone who is a business owner to adopt this methodology. I guarantee that if you do, you will want to increase your service levels to your team, and once you do, even by the slightest of changes, they will be more appreciative, happier, and provide better service to the clients in your community.

It's not only about the money. For those who follow us on Facebook, it is quite evident that we do many team and family events on a monthly basis. From breakfast meetings at the beginning of every month to Friday night family pizza nights at the end of each month. Throughout the year we put on cinema nights for clients and staff and have our annual Eview Group Family Christmas Picnic: and it shouldn't come as a surprise that it is our favourite event of the year. There are many more events that we do. We organise them because we love to, not because we have to. It must come from the heart. At times we feel we are more an events company than a real estate company!

60 Second Lesson: Whether you're an agent with a small team or a full-blown office, pull out a yearly calendar and schedule some 'team events'. Choose events that can be recurring and simple to organise. Lock them in and invite the team!

Volume is Vanity, Profit is Sanity

It may seem that it goes without saying that we are in business to make a profit, not a loss. We can have all the KPIs

line up like a row of ducks and pick them off one at a time and get the highest score. But if the number one KPI in business – profit – is not being met, it's all over.

We are in business to make a profit. When we make enough profit, it provides us with the choice and ability to provide the lifestyle for our families that we aspire to. It's really not that complicated.

What I have found travelling around Australia is that in many (dare I say most) agencies, agents focus on volume of gross commission written rather than profit. And some, just to make it even worse, include the GST! What the ...!

Many are more interested in winning the trophy for being the Number 1 agent or office in their region. More emphasis is placed on winning the award than working the business to make a profit. (I have seriously spoken to agencies who have written \$2 million in GCI, where the director, who still lists and sells, makes less profit than a single agent in our network writing \$250,000 in GCI.)

What many business owners don't realise (and remembering that many business owners who have made the natural transition to director are from a sales background so it's understandable why most focus on volume rather than profit) is what I call the 'law of diminishing returns'. This principal of economic law states that productivity increases in certain circumstances result in a decrease in net profit. The cost of providing the infrastructure to generate the increased productivity exceeds the end profit. In real estate business, it

is usually a case of an increase of human resources, for example, an extra employee costing \$50,000 annually to a business would require a minimum \$100,000 to \$120,000 GCI of written sales per annum (and that's if the agents are awarded 50% of the sales commission) just to break even. No extra profit has been made by the increase.

This applies more so to individual agents adding a personal assistant. The extra volume required to sustain the assistant isn't generated, and although overall volume of GCI may have increased, the level of increase doesn't produce a greater profit compared with sales generated prior to the assistant being hired.

If you think you may be in this position or would like a better of understanding of how to measure your profit against written sales (i.e. GCI), by all means, drop us an email and I will see if I can help you get an understanding of it.

60 Second Lesson: Before adding any major expenses or overheads to your business, calculate the gross GCI you need to make to cover the cost of the expenditure. Review sales targets and only proceed if you believe they are achievable and can add to your overall bottom line.

CHAPTER 8 – MY GREATEST EVER LESSONS.

Just Try it For a Day

It was a Wednesday afternoon, approximately 4 pm, in June of 1996. I was on the serving side of the fish and chip shop counter just having finished the afternoon preparation for the evening dinner trade.

It was a typical day, nothing out of the ordinary. The shop was empty, until a gentleman with a suit walked into the store. It was the first time I had met him and he put out his hand to shake mine, introduced himself as Arthur Bromidis from Harvest Choice Foods and placed a 5 kg bag of frozen chips on the counter.

He was a wholesale food producer ‘pedalling his wares.’ He was going ‘door-to-door’.

At the time, our Fish and Chip shop produced and cooked fresh chips. That is, we manually processed approximately three tons of potatoes every week, placed them through a potato peeler and chipper, and pre-cooked our daily requirement ... an extremely labour intensive exercise. It was one of the major processes that stopped us from being able to duplicate and establish more stores.

So there was Arthur presenting me with a bag of frozen chips. He knew the downside to the fresh chip process and was

trying to capture the market. We had considered it in the past but the price point of the frozen product was simply too prohibitive, or so I thought. However, we knew that if we were able to introduce the frozen product, it would change our entire process and save around 80 hours worth of labour per week.

It wasn't the first time I had been approached to sample a frozen product. Each time I resisted as it simply wasn't affordable. But this time was different. Arthur suggested I call a fellow Fish and Chip shop operator as he had been using the product for some time and was extremely happy. His name was John and, although I didn't know him personally, I was aware of the store he was referring to. So I called him and asked for his opinion.

Now there are sliding door moments and then there are sliding door moments. This one was like no other. After speaking with John for only a few minutes, he responded with,

"Just try it for a day!"

Those words were absolutely life changing. I'm not sure I can do them justice or explain how profound the statement of "Just try it for a day!" was. What an absolutely simple and powerful concept.

So we took John's advice and the very next day had our supply of frozen chips delivered to the store. We got to sleep in as we didn't have to prepare our quota of fresh chips and we used the frozen chips for the entire day. A little nervous to start

with ... we were not sure how our customers would react to the changed product.

Well, the response from our customers was nothing short of incredible! The product was first-class and although we had to reduce the quantity of each serve to allow for the extra cost, we had created raving fans from the moment the first customers were served. The phone did not stop ringing with compliments. And the rest as they say, is history.

Coupled with the changes we made to the fitting-out of the store, we went on to expand and replicate the operation to become of the most successful fast food outlets in the region.

That same lesson has been applied in many areas of our business life and real estate careers. It is often brought up whenever 'new' initiatives are introduced to the team, and every so often, a similar outcome has resulted.

All because of six words: *"Just try it for a day."*

“To live the life only 5% live, have the courage to dream the dreams, run the habits and model the behaviours only 5% do.”

ROBIN SHARMA

A Life-Changing Lesson at Age 15

Do you remember the first time you either read or heard the quote "To have what only the 5% have, you must do what only the 5% are prepared to do?" There are variations on this statement and it can be applied in many areas of life. For example, if we were to reference money in the statement, statistically, 95% of the world's wealth is held by 5% of the world's population. (If you Google 'wealth in the world' there are even more startling facts: 1% of the world's population holds 99% of the wealth, and 62 individuals of the 1% control more than half of that!)

The same can be said about health and wellbeing. Only 5% of the population achieve their optimum weight range whilst 95% struggle. (I'm sure by now you probably know I love statistics!)

In a nutshell it implies that only 5% of people reach the top of their fields, goals, and aspirations.

So going back to my question, when did you first hear or read about the 95/5% formula? Did it have an impact on your life as it did mine?

Let me share my story.

On the very day I turned 15 years of age and was able to apply for work, I got my first job as a car wash hand at a local petrol station. A few months later, a Red Rooster store (a fast food BBQ chicken franchise) had opened opposite and was also

looking for casual staff for the evening shifts. I applied for that position as well and held both jobs thereafter for three and five years respectively. I was never afraid of hard work. I used to always say, “Hard work is afraid of me!”

Both jobs were very typical: labour intensive and paid by the hour. (The part time rate for the carwash was \$1.75 per hour and the Red Rooster position paid just over \$2.50. How times have changed!) I would always arrive to work at least 15 minutes early and never leave on time ... never! I always made sure that the incoming staff had a fully prepared station on taking over from me, even if it meant me staying back. And I never asked to get paid for my extra efforts, I just thought it was the right thing to do. It was kitchen hand duties and washing cars. Not glamorous, but I was not bothered. I just wanted to do a good job, complete the tasks quickly, and earn money to do and buy the things I wanted. I was your typical teenage kid going to school with a part-time job.

My store manager at Red Rooster was Simon. He was a student at Monash University studying to become a tertiary teacher whilst holding the position of store manager for this particular outlet.

He was a very fair and skilful manager and had the team running and working well. Except for one individual who was two years older than me, we will call him John because I really can't remember his name. John was one of those kids who would rock up late to work, do the least he could during the shift, and always leave the more 'difficult' jobs, such as cleaning out the rotisseries and doing the dishes (I really didn't

like doing the dishes!), to everyone else. He would never fill in a shift for any other team member or help out, he simply did the bare minimum just to get by.

So on this particular shift, for which both John and I were rostered, it was absolutely flat out. We were getting smashed, and I mean smashed. Orders were flying out of the printers in one continuous stream, customers were getting disgruntled, and we were absolutely struggling to keep up. The best way to describe to it was organised chaos! Of course, we were all running around like headless chooks and we all had to put in extra effort to get the job done ... everyone did except for, you guessed it, John. And I cracked! I went off my head and was so pissed that John wouldn't carry his fair share of the workload. I spat the dummy and the dummy spat was directed at Simon! I mean, it was his responsibility to get John to do his fair share and not leave it up to everyone else to take on his load.

So the scene was now set for one of my life's most profound life lessons.

The rostered shift was coming to its end and the store was closed for the clean-up. John left, as he, "Couldn't arrange for a later pick up from his parents," and there was still heaps of cleaning to do. You can imagine that my blood was boiling and I made sure Simon knew about it with continuous whining and whinging. And that's when Simon had had enough.

In not so polite language, he yelled out to me and sent me to his office. I was about to receive his one minute 'lesson'.

Simon: *“Manos, sit down and listen to what I have to say ... People like John are in the 95% of the world. They do just enough to get by; doing ‘extra’ is not in their vocabulary. The other 5% get the job done and more, no matter what. They don’t whine and whinge and they don’t care what others do or don’t do. They don’t look at things being fair or not fair, they just do. They make things happen and achieve everything they want in life. So you have a choice right now, not tomorrow, but today, right this moment. DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THE 5% OR 95%?”*

I replied (instantly and petrified at the same time) *“I want to be in the 5%.”*

SIMON: *“Then get out there and finish the dishes!”*

It took Simon less than 60 seconds to deliver those words. He was 21 years of age.

Fast forward thirty-five-plus years and I still reflect on that ‘not so typical’ Red Rooster shift. It was an invaluable life lesson without question. Have I lived up to Simon’s expectations by being part of the 5%? In some areas of my life, yes; in others, not quite. What I do know for sure ... as it was then, and as it is now ... is we have a daily choice, minute by minute, to live a life that aspires to be part of the 5%.

When is Enough, Enough?

I love reading self-help books, and one of my favourite authors is Tom Peters, co-author of *The New York Times* Best Seller, *In Search of Excellence*. In one of his more recent books, *The Little Big Things: 163 Ways to Pursue Excellence*, I found the following passage, a short extract from page 28:

“It ‘Boggles’ the Mind”

*At a party given by a billionaire on Shelter Island, Kurt Vonnegut informs his pal, Joseph Heller, that their host, a hedge fund manager, had made more money in a single day than Heller had earned from his wildly popular novel Catch-22 over its whole history. Heller responds, ‘Yes, but I have something he will never have ... **enough.**’”*

Wow! What an awesome comeback line; I bet it left Kurt Vonnegut speechless!

So when is enough, enough? I will leave that for you to figure out.

“Do something
today your future
self will thank you
for.”

UNKNOWN

Enjoy the Journey

If we were to compress the Earth's existence of four and a half billion years to a measure of one year, our entire life span on this amazing planet would amount to less than half a second! So, as I sit and write the final passage of the book and contemplate that, more than ever, the time we have left is our most precious resource, I'm mindful not to waste yours. I'm thinking about what short message I can leave you that will encapsulate the essence of the book, and I believe it is this.

Be one of those rare few who just make things happen.

On this final note, I wish you a life of abundance filled with health, wealth, prosperity, and most of all, peace, love, and happiness.

Enjoy the journey: life is the best rollercoaster ride you can take.

Manos Findikakis

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT US

The Eview Group was built to provide a platform for business owners to be in business for themselves but not by themselves. The platform provides 'pick and choose' centralised services using the latest technologies and the group's economies of scale. Since November 2006, Eview has provided an opportunity for others to leverage the network's strengths, profit from our knowledge, be recognised for their achievements and be part of a team culture often described as one of the best in the country.

WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

Combining our expertise in branding, all facets of real estate operation, and business ownership, we are able to deliver a low-cost turnkey solution for a start-up agency and for established independents. We allow the opportunity for established brands to retain their current identity and be able to leverage both in their marketplace to gain a competitive advantage. We also design and create new brands for new start-up opportunities.

SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Both Manos and Maria are available for speaking opportunities. Their key message is how to create a fun and profitable business. Some of their favourite topics to speak on are:

- Branding and how to differentiate yourself in the marketplace
- Your team members are your customers; treat them that way

- How to build and maintain an amazing culture
- Business planning and strategy
- Attract, Sell, Wow and The 7 phases of the Selling Lifecycle
- High Impact and Wipe-out prospecting program
- The A to Z of a start-up

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITITES

We are looking for talented individuals throughout Australia who may currently be in a position, be thinking of starting their own agency, or currently have an established business and are looking for genuine support. If you would like to explore the Eview Group opportunity we would love to talk to you.

To make an appointment or for general enquiries please email:
60seconds@eview.com.au

WARNING: DO NOT READ THIS BOOK UNLESS YOU WANT A NEW WAY OF BUILDING YOUR REAL ESTATE BUSINESS AND CAREER

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In his latest book and sequel, *'The 60 Second Entrepreneur,'* Manos distils the wisdom of more than three decades of business experience offering real estate entrepreneurs the tools to sustain a thriving career in these challenging and disruptive times. Sharing advice from mentors, business experts and revealing lessons learnt from his entrepreneurial journey, he will help you create a blueprint to live the life of your dreams.

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With three decades of experience owning and operating a number of businesses across multiple industries since the age of 21 and employing hundreds of staff, Manos understands that innovation and creativity must be inherent in the customer service offering to separate your business from the pack. With a contrarian approach to leadership, Manos believes for a business to survive in this age of massive disruption, it must be seen and behave as a moving target. A big believer in self-development and a passion for research, Manos has attended many events worldwide to stay connected and reach out for new ideas both inside and outside the Real Estate Industry. Serving as the CEO of The Eview Group, the business's unique real estate model is Manos' brainchild and a paradigm shift in thinking for the Real Estate Industry. With business partner and wife Maria, they are regularly asked to participate in the Real Estate speaking circuit to share ideas on how they have created one of Australia's most exciting real estate groups. Their life mission is 'To inspire and help others create fun and profitable businesses so that they can live extraordinary lives.'



Manos & Maria Findikakis
Directors and Founders of the Eview Group.

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