

# Manage your time – become a business brain surgeon

## What do you have in common with Bill Gates and Richard Branson? You have the same 24 hours in a day.

It's what you do with those hours that produces the difference. Often business owners are working longer hours and taking home less than their staff. If this is you, maybe it's time you learnt what brain surgeons do.

Most business owners are micro-managers. They have learnt from experience if they give work to someone else, they mess it up and then they spend twice as long fixing things. But this is not what brain surgeons do. When they operate on a patient, they are not in charge of the theatre – the theatre nurse is. They don't open up the patient, or close. They leave that to a junior surgeon. Everything is prepared for them and someone else mops up the blood later. All they do is the brain surgery. With a little bit of marketing beforehand (client needs) and a little bit more marketing afterwards (client satisfaction).

### How is this possible?

Hospitals have very sophisticated systems and everyone is highly trained in their use. There are checks and counterchecks. Nothing is left to chance. The theatre nurse does not know how to do brain surgery,

but they know before the operation what equipment the surgeon will need and when they will need it. They will also know how the theatre and patient is to be prepared. Detailed procedures will have been developed so everyone in the theatre will know their role and the very expensive brain surgeon will have optimised his or her time doing what they have been specifically trained to do. So the brain surgeon only does the brain surgery, plus a bit of marketing.

The point of this for business owners is to understand where the real brain surgery is in their business. The part of their job that is most valuable to the business. The part only they can do, which for most business owners is only a very small part of their time. In other words, they don't spend dollar time on penny jobs.

### A great theory, but how can you make this happen in the real world?

Business systems.

When you delegate or outsource, you need to document what the person doing the work will receive and what they will return to you, complete with standards and the form in which they will provide it to you. Then all involved need training in the system.

This takes some work, but for a small investment in your time, the dividends are huge.

Business owners often don't do this because they believe they are saving money by

doing things themselves. What they miss is that if it is someone else's brain surgery, for example doing the books – which many owners do and is a bookkeeper's brain surgery – they probably don't do them very well, leaving their highly priced accountant to fix their mess up at the end of the year. While the owner is spending time doing their books, who is spending time with their customers?

Achieving more with your allotted 24 hours in a day is also not about being more efficient at doing what you currently do.

Achieving more is only possible by doing less. However, owners won't make this change unless they value their time. What is your time worth when you focus on the brain surgery? That is the tasks with the greatest earning power. When you have placed a dollar value on your time, how much else of what you are doing could be done at a significant saving by others?

When you know where the brain surgery is in your business, you will be able to leverage your time. You will spend more time with your customers and more time working on your business, rather than in it.

Ultimately, you will have a business that runs without you.

**Dr Greg Chapman, Director, Empower Business Solutions**

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